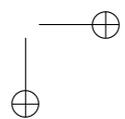
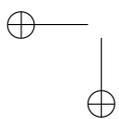
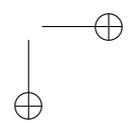
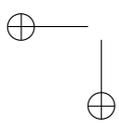
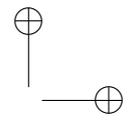
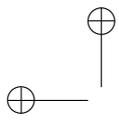
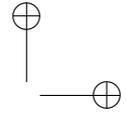
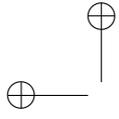


A Journal of These Days

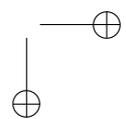
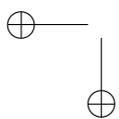


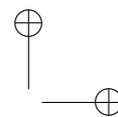
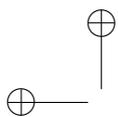




A Journal of These Days  
*Albert Jay Nock*

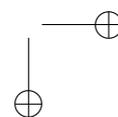
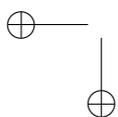
*IWP*

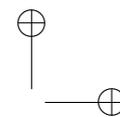
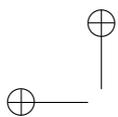




2022  
First Published in 1934

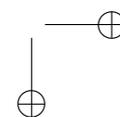
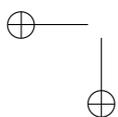
Typeset by Isaac Waisberg

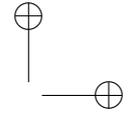
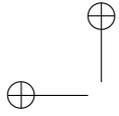




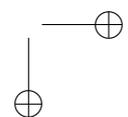
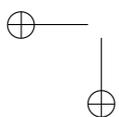
## Contents

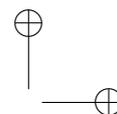
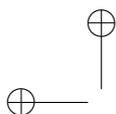
1932 June	1
1932 July	15
1932 August	29
1932 September	37
1932 October	51
1932 November	67
1932 December	87
1933 January	103
1933 February	119
1933 March	131
1933 April	149
1933 May	167
1933 June	185
1933 July	205





1933 August	223
1933 September	237
1933 October	253
1933 November	257
1933 December	275

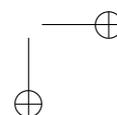
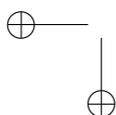


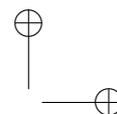
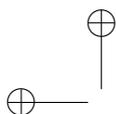


## 1932 June

*10 June* – An interesting story of adventure in the psychic realm. Marthe, a pretty negress from Martinique, parlour-maid at the T's, told E. T., who tells me, that if you wish to wake up at a certain hour, you should call on a dead friend just before going to sleep – someone you knew well enough to ask small favours – and ask him to awaken you. Marthe says she always does this, and never fails to wake at the right moment. It is a rather lovely superstition, if it be a superstition; for all one knows there may be something in it. I knew people who would gladly have done a little turn like that for me when they were alive, and no doubt still would, if they have the power.

*11 June* – The Shaw-Terry correspondence, which I have been reading piecemeal at irregular intervals, has hardly more than a professional interest, but for one thing which is important enough to the general reader to justify publication. Under all its affectations of comedy, it reveals natures fundamentally sound and good, even lovable and gracious, and it is a pleasant experience,



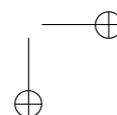
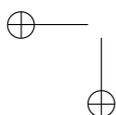


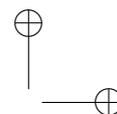
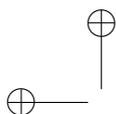
none too common, to be associated with such natures throughout as long a book as this.

*12 June* – M. writes me today that “there are no more rich people in this country.” It reminds me of the Yankee rustic’s saying that “the old squire ain’t what he useter be, and he never was.” I think the kind of people M. writes about are merely discovering how rich they never were. Our bankers and politicians and their jackal economists have had them all thinking in terms of paper so long that they believe paper is the only thing that has value. Perhaps they will begin to think in terms of commodities, if any of them are capable of thinking at all, which I doubt.

No fundamental economics have been taught in this country for thirty-five years; nothing but stockmarket jargon and banking practice. All the actual wealth in the world is in commodities, in the products of labour and capital applied to natural resources; aside from these, there is no wealth anywhere. I have often wondered what Swift and Company, for instance, would do if all their stockholders wrote in to ask if they would please send them their year’s dividends in products; not in checks, but in ham, beef, sausage, or whatever they have handy. Perhaps Swift and Company could do it and keep their market going, but I doubt it.

One good reason why London remains the world’s financial centre is because it is the centre of competent information about everything that a financier needs to know. Go to a London banker with a project for a railway in Borrioboola-gha, and in an hour he can put his hand on somebody able to tell him whether the project is sound

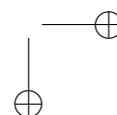
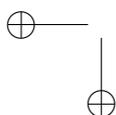


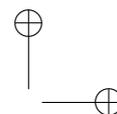
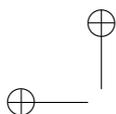


or not, and why. This can not be done in New York. A second reason is that English bankers do banking, not pawn-brokerage or stock-jobbing. The English banker wants to know, first, whether your project is sound; second, are you honest; third, are you competent; fourth, is the interest-rate satisfactory. Settle these points, and you get your money in twenty-four hours. The American banker asks, first, will the security cover the loan twice over; second, what is the biggest interest-rate we can get; third, how are we going to make this devil reorganize his business so we can take it away from him.

With banks popping all over the United States like firecrackers, I have not heard of a single bank-failure in England or in Canada; no, nor yet in Mexico. If there have been any, I have not heard of them.

*13 June* – Here in Rhode Island, the most populous State in the Union, a motor-car that I was in had to slow down at ten o'clock last night to keep from running over a deer. This was on the old Post Road, at Matunuck. Four deer were browsing in a garden the other night, on the edge of Wakefield. Where I am, not far from the Pier, a covey of goldfinches keep hanging around the entrance, scarlet tanagers are about, the quail are tame as hens and just about as abundant, while woodpeckers and whippoorwills are an utter nuisance, as annoying as church-bells in Germany. The noise of whippoorwills seems as senseless as the noise of church-bells, too, which makes it all the more aggravating. Everybody has a clock nowadays, and knows when it is church-time; yet the churches, like the whippoorwills, break up your sleep merely for some kind of devilish comfort they get out





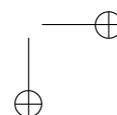
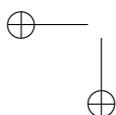
of it, apparently. The woodpecker has his living to get, so he is understandable, but one wishes he would keep better hours.

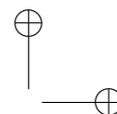
In America, I like the country best in winter; if I must be in New York at all, I prefer to be there in summer. In Europe, I like to stick to the city the year round, except for brief excursions; their city life is as well-organized and pleasant as ours is dull. I have not found country life there, however, nearly as well-organized as here.

Rhode Island has the best system of roads in the world, I believe. A new highway has lately been cut through; you may go on it almost from one end of the State to the other without seeing a sign of human life; and this in the smallest and most thickly-populated of all our States.

*14 June* – Politics has put the Lindbergh baby's abduction out of the press, and probably out of the public mind as well; but I see today a brief mention of something in connexion with Curtis, the Norfolk pretender. As I see it, Curtis's great sin was the unforgivable one of being logical. Our people have been intensively trained for generations never under any circumstances to let a sentimental consideration obscure their view of the next dollar; well, Curtis was true to that principle in a case that happened to be notorious – his doings were "good copy."

Some years ago one of my friends told me of having been in C. P. Huntington's office when E. H. Harriman, who was then a rising young man with a small railway, came in for a moment on some errand. When Harriman had gone, Huntington smiled and said to my friend, "He's a nice little man. Some day I'll have his railroad." C.

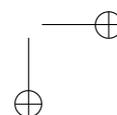
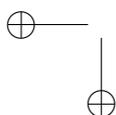


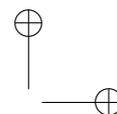


P. Huntington, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and their like, were the sovereign educators of America in their day, and Mr. Curtis, like all the rest of us, was brought up in their school; they never let sentiment or ordinary integrity stay their hand from somebody else's money, nor did he.

I do not remember any incident in my lifetime as thoroughly exhibitory of our civilization as this of the Lindbergh baby, and as little recognized as such. When the parents immediately went over the heads of the political organization at the top of society and appealed to the corresponding organization at the bottom, authorizing two of its most notorious members to represent them, no one seemed to regard it as unnatural or out of the way. Every phase of the incident that was made public, as far as I observed them, seemed as exhibitory as this; almost as if it were designed for an evidential purpose, even to the last incident, the suicide of the maid. The British press says freely that she was nagged to desperation by the police, and anyone who knows what the methods of our police are, must agree that the burden of proof rests on the authorities; for the woman was wholly innocent of any complicity in the kidnapping, and was so proven. One of the Canadian newspapers summed up its impressions of the Lindbergh case by saying, "What newspapers! What a police! What a country!" Really, that is all one can say.

*15 June* – I have been reading a biographical sketch of William Morris Hunt, the Boston artist, and I am once more struck with the excellent way that artists often have of expressing themselves in writing. They seem to know

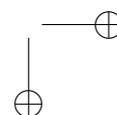
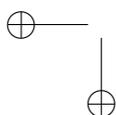


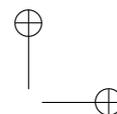


precisely what they want to say, and they say it with a simplicity, directness and purity of style that is truly admirable. Perhaps their training is such as helps the development of an editorial sense, so that in dealing with words they instinctively proceed as they do in fastening on the significant features of something they are drawing or painting; also they may learn to compose sentences and paragraphs through the technique of composing a picture. No doubt, too, they might get the invaluable editorial habit of looking at a paragraph with the eye of a reader and not the eye of a writer, because they are continually looking at their paintings in that way. Hunt wrote extremely well, and John la Farge even better. Joseph Pennell wrote in the driving, impatient style of an impatient man, which he was whenever the practice of his art was not concerned, but he wrote with precision and with great force.

*18 June* – The Republican convention has come to its despicable end, despicable and trivial. Nothing but Prohibition – and Hoover – as was to be expected, and the “keynote speech” and the platform leave both on the fence. The only thing I can understand in the Prohibition plank is that it proposes to conserve all the patronage and graft that the present arrangements allow; the Federal organization will be maintained to help the dry States keep out invasions from the wet States. Just so. But what a question to pose before a people as a major political issue!

The great popular argument for repeal, I see, is that the government can get revenue out of whiskey and beer, and so reduce taxes. This is the surest way back to all

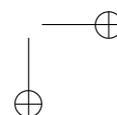
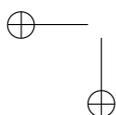


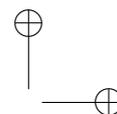


the ancient evils of the liquor traffic. Nature runs so easily to alcohol that it is one of the cheapest products in the world. If the government did not tax alcohol and kept its hands off it entirely, letting it be sold everywhere as freely as peanuts, it would be so cheap that nobody could afford to keep a saloon. Nobody sets up a retail peanut business, for there would be no money in it.

Nicholas Murray Butler has impressed me for years as one of the strangest characters I have ever contemplated. He is a very able man; in many directions, I believe, not unscrupulous; and in some directions surprisingly large-minded. Some of his chief interests and enthusiasms strike one as extraordinary, such as his concern with politics, and his apparent faith in the American political system; also his apparent faith in a humbugging peace propaganda. Still, one must remember that, as Matthew Arnold put it, Faraday was “a great natural philosopher with one side of his being, and a Sandemanian with the other.” Such inconsistencies are clearly possible, though inexplicable. I never met Mr. Butler but once, for a few moments only; he was very courteous. I have great respect for him, more, I am sure, by a great deal, than for any other man at all prominent in our public life, or who has been prominent in it since the death of William Jay Gaynor. I can not imagine his commanding anyone’s affection, mine least of all; nor would I trust him implicitly in all circumstances; but I have great respect for him. A strange character.

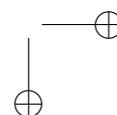
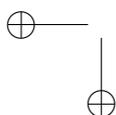
*19 June* – The day of the liberal and the constitutionalist seems to be over, and it is high time. The war made hay of liberalism, and our Constitution has been so consis-

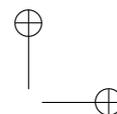




tently clapperclawed into the service of base purposes that popular superstition about its sanctity has evaporated. The political liberal is the most dangerous person in the world to be entrusted with power, for no one knows what he will do with it; and the worst of him is, that whatever he does, he will persuade himself that it was the divinely-appointed thing to be done, e.g., Mr. Wilson at the Peace Conference. The old-style, hard-baked Tory had character; you knew where he was; also you knew there were some things he would not do and could not be persuaded to do. The liberal has no character, only stubbornness; and there is nothing he will not do. Of all the crew of crooks that were herded at Versailles, the only one I had a grain of respect for was old Clémenceau. You could do business with Clémenceau; he was out for everything in sight, and made no bones of saying so. He also seemed to take a grim delight in showing up the shuffling piosities of his accomplices. I have known many political liberals in my lifetime, some very highly placed, and there is none of them whom I would willingly see again, either in this world or in the next.

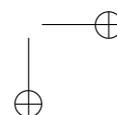
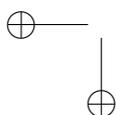
*20 June* – I spent an hour yesterday in the Sunday crowd on Narragansett Pier beach, formerly a resort of the social elect, in the days when transportation was slow and costly. Now it is a sort of Coney Island for all of Providence, Pawtucket, etc., who can coax a decrepit automobile to carry them that far. On principle, I am glad of the change; the old régime had little to recommend it but its amenities, which were mostly superficial enough, but agreeable to share. The crowd that descends on Narragansett now is dreadful. Of all the masses of mankind,

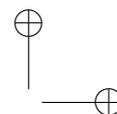
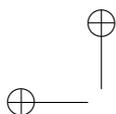




I think, the most ignoble and repulsive is the mass of the small bourgeois. In their progress from the proletariat they have left its solid virtues behind them, and carried with them nothing but its rapacity and hideousness; nor have they taken on anything from the upper bourgeois but his narrowness, timidity, and an exaggeration of his petty conventions. Mr. Jefferson says that some of his diplomatic colleagues “had learned nothing of diplomacy but its suspicions.” These people are like that, and they are almost all the people we have. More completely now than when Matthew Arnold said it, we are like England “with the Barbarians left out, and the Populace nearly so.”

Speaking of Arnold, I see that the Oxford Press is about to publish his correspondence with Clough, and his commonplace books, an enterprise much overdue. Arnold told the English people the exact truth about themselves, and for that he has been quietly neglected. That country deserves no great men, and now at last has none. If it kept on going to the dogs in a commercial and imperialist way for some time longer, it might produce some. I have often thought likewise that if Germany were broken up again into its constituent States, it might bring forth a few like those of old; certainly it has none now. I think it is pretty clear that nationalism and centralization have run a good many countries beside our own far past the margin of diminishing returns. The great argument for decentralization is that man is incapable of conducting a satisfactory collective life on any larger than township scale. Neither his collective intelligence nor his collective emotional power will stretch much beyond that. Do these people here in the township of South Kingstown really

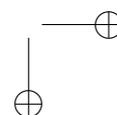
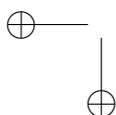


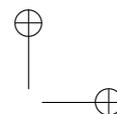


care a great deal what happens over in Connecticut or up in Providence, even? Precious little. Rhode Island is run on the township system, by the old-fashioned town-meeting, and as far as I can see, it is a model of economical and efficient State administration; probably not perfect, but so far ahead of any I know that it is worth notice. When I speak to outsiders about this, they always say, "Well, they can do that up there; Rhode Island is so small." Yes, but it strikes me that the logic of that observation points to something pretty obvious.

*23 June* – I see that Hoover has been talking again. Right on the heels of the Republican convention, he came out with a transparent proposal that all hands cut down armaments by one third flat, all round, I think it was; I did not get far with reading it. National politics just now breed back to the ripe old seventies, when Walt Whitman marvelled at "the never-ending audacity of elected persons." Fewer, I believe, are taken in by it; no one abroad, of course, and fewer at home. The French papers say plainly that Hoover fears he is coming to the end of his rope, and is resorting to the method of spectacular manifesto to give his press and heelers a talking-point – which is the exact truth. The only occupation I know of that seems to me to stand on the moral level of jobholding is running an assignation-house; and when you find a man in search of it, and twisting, crawling, lying and tergiversating in order to get it, you get pretty good prima facie evidence of what manner of man he is.

It surprises me, however, to notice the sort of people who are getting their eye-teeth cut. William C. was here

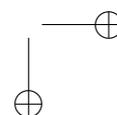
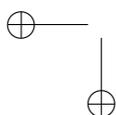


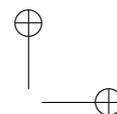
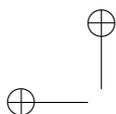


yesterday. He comes of dyed-in-the-wool Republicans, who have said their prayers out of the New York *Tribune* ever since the days of Horace Greeley. When I spoke of the conventions, he said, "I haven't the faintest interest in anything that either of them do; both of them are nothing but a bunch of cheap grafters." If I had said that in his presence ten years ago, I think even five, it would have bred a fine row.

*25 June* – Friends picked me up today and took me to Newport, around the ocean drive. It is very fine, but I prefer Narragansett, both for sightliness and climate. It is cooler than Newport, I believe, and the fogs are not so heavy. I stopped in to call on Dr. Jacobs, of Baltimore; Dr. Bell was there, and the rector of Trinity Church. I noticed the same invasion of Newport that I saw at the Pier a week ago, which rather surprised me, for Newport is still moderately inaccessible, and going there by motor-car is expensive. By way of the Mount Hope Bridge, you pay a toll of fifty cents each way; by the ferries from Saunderstown, much more. Coming home about five o'clock, the roads were a solid procession of motor-cars. Between the Narrow River bridge and Sherry's pavilion at the Pier, 109 cars passed us. All the parking-space at the Pier was full, and certainly there would be even more on the seven miles from the Pier to Point Judith.

It is the depression, of course. My notion is that the depression furnishes a pretty good pretext for people to do what they want to do with their money. I have seen some hardship, certainly, but I have also seen a great many people who appeared to be living much as they had always done, and who resisted valid demands on the



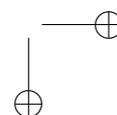
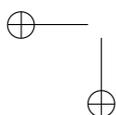


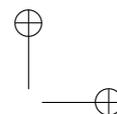
plea of reverses. Someone remarked the other day that when 70,000 people can attend a prize-fight, there must be money somewhere.

I find Herbert Gorman's book on Alexandre Dumas highly praiseworthy. It is three years old, and I have just now got around to it. It bears the marks of conscientious hard labour and an excellent editorial talent; interesting and readable, and not vulgar – in short, quite the kind of thing that one who knows Gorman would expect. He has behaved honourably towards literature, I believe, always; and his reward has been just what a conscientious man of letters might look for in a country where, as the critic Senkowsky said of Russia, “we do not possess a literature; we have nothing but a book-trade.”

Dr. Jacobs told me today that he has a second edition of Rabelais's notes on Hippocrates; it is in Baltimore. I have never seen these notes, and I am eager to do so.

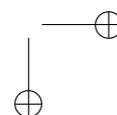
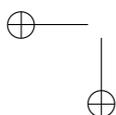
*27 June* – There is a good negro woman here, Reba M., who has the inexplicable knack that certain persons have with plants and flowers. She insists that one must talk to flowers while tending them, otherwise they will not grow. It struck me as a very pretty belief. Reba talks to her flowers steadily, and they never fail to grow for her, and do well. There is no doubt in my mind that this natural gift exists, and also the opposite. I have seen too many instances of it not to believe it; but I can not account for it, nor have I heard of anyone who could. One of my aunts, my mother's oldest sister, could get any plant to grow, yet she spent little time over it. On the other hand, a curious instance was that of a professor of agronomy who lived next to me for

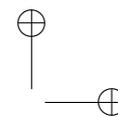
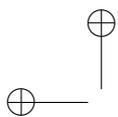




a time. He laid out a garden on scientific principles, and never got anything out of it; every vegetable he planted promptly died; it was the laughing-stock of the neighbourhood. My garden, in the same soil, a superb Blue Grass virgin earth, flourished marvellously, though I am no gardener and took little care of it. One day the professor asked me if he might have some little cucumbers from some vines that I was growing for pickles. I had all I wanted, so I told him to help himself as long as they lasted, which normally would have been a couple of weeks or more. He picked over the vines once, and never got any more; they stopped bearing at once. I think that very little is known about the scope of natural affinities and antipathies. This particular phenomenon of the behaviour of plants and flowers, apparently under their influence, always interested me as a problem, but I do not see how any explanation of it is to be got at. The gift that some have with animals is well known. When I was a young man, I heard of a woman who could pick up houseflies with her fingers. The young lady who told me this was a friend of hers and a model of truthfulness. She said she had often seen her do it.

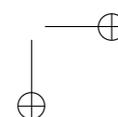
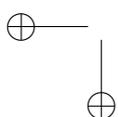
*29 June* – The best time and place for one to live in is when and where there is the most doing in one's own line, and the things that one loves are respected. If I had been given a voice in the matter – and provided I should have money enough to live on in decent comfort – I would have chosen to be born in Paris in 1805 and to depart this life towards the end of threescore and ten, say in 1880. For one of my turn of mind, I should say that would cover the most interesting period in the world's history.

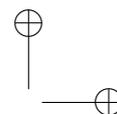




Herbert Gorman's *Dumas* revived this notion. Years ago Appletons published an anonymous book called *An Englishman in Paris*, one of the most interesting I ever read. I went through it twice last spring, and still keep it by me; it gives an excellent idea of the middle and latter parts of this period, and of the characters that one would be thrown with.

To estimate a period, one has only to imagine the great representatives of the best reason and spirit of man as living in it, and judge how it would affect them. Plato, Sophocles, Dante, Rabelais, would not have done badly in Paris during those seventy-five years. On the other hand, our industrialists, speculators, shavers, who have moulded modern America to their own mind, would have had as dull a time then as a decent man has in the present world of their creating.

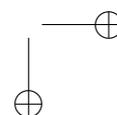
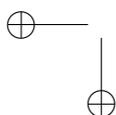


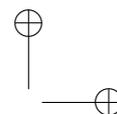
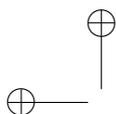


## 1932 July

*1 July* – The Democrats in Chicago have nominated Roosevelt, and called for a repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, so the papers say; so, for those who like that sort of thing, I presume it is about the sort of thing they like, and that is all the comment one need make. The Democrats, while calling for repeal, were careful to safeguard the patronage and the graft, like the Republicans.

Prohibition has been a first-rate political stalking-horse for ten years. While people were thinking about Prohibition, they were not thinking about the rascalities of the Harding-Coolidge Administrations. Prohibition and a high stock-market – these were thy gods, O Israel! For a time now they will be thinking so hard about repeal that they will not notice the doings of whatever set of scoundrels comes into power in November. The next actual business of politics will be the looting of water-power; and this, I predict, is the one thing that will not be mentioned by anyone. Water-power is the only natural resource, the only remaining scrap of valuable public property that has not been knaved into the grasp



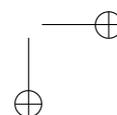
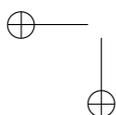


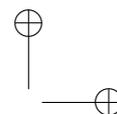
of private monopoly, and now is the time for it to go the way of the rest.

*5 July* – A fat hen-pheasant sat by the side of the road, and let me pass within a dozen feet of her, without stirring. The tameness of the wild birds and animals hereabout is remarkable; it is because no one disturbs them.

*7 July* – Nicholas Murray Butler, in Paris, has come out with a speech advocating the enforcement of peace by boycott of any transgressing nation! A strange character! As thoroughly impractical a man as ever lived, he has somehow got the reputation of being highly practical. He has dabbled in politics all his life, and knows nothing about them. He has been a university president for thirty years, and knows nothing about his university – I think, deliberately. He is head of the Carnegie Peace Institute, and knows nothing whatever about the essential conditions of peace or of war. He sees any problem as something standing entirely by itself, disengaged from and unrelated to any other problem, and there are no such problems. He will speak out boldly on a secondary issue, like Prohibition, apparently with no idea of the primary issues behind it. He was for years a professor of philosophy, and is incapable of proceeding with the stringency of a philosopher or even of a logician, with respect to any public question.

*10 July* – Do only Communists get hungry? Are Reds the only people capable of a natural reaction to misery and hopelessness? The New York *Herald Tribune* has lately

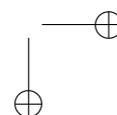
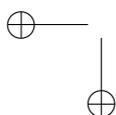


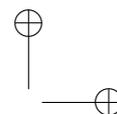
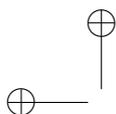


carried a line or two occasionally about some poor people who have made some sort of disturbance somewhere, and always says they were Communists or Reds. It is hard to imagine a more despicable institution than our press. I never did a day's work on a newspaper in my life, but I know several newspaper men, and I think the worst count against our press is what it makes of its servants. From what knowledge I have, which is not great, I am inclined to make an exception for the Baltimore *Sun*, though I do not know how it would come out on a closer acquaintance. I would be willing to write for them for a few months – something in the way of a personal column – for the sake of the experience.

*12 July* – I have often thought that the peculiar richness of our language may have something to do with the tendency to indirection in our thought, and with our strange fear of words. Americans like to convey an idea by indirection, and our language helps them to do it, because it is so rich in synonyms and lends itself so well to periphrasis. This is especially our way with ideas that are unpleasant; we think that some of the unpleasantness is taken off by indirect expression. Originally, of course, the language shaped itself on the thought; but now, I think, it tends to keep thought in its original mould. The French and Flemish, for instance, think more directly and objectively than we do, and their languages, both in vocabulary and structure, tend to direct and objective expression.

*14 July* – At dinner today Christiane commented on the hard looks of the French Chamber of Deputies. This is

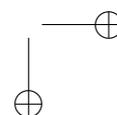
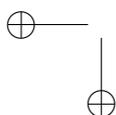


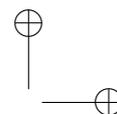


an idea that has often occurred to me – that people are strangely inattentive to the physiognomy of politicians. The pictures of men in our public life are a perfect Rogues' Gallery. They are published every day in our newspapers, but no one seems to notice anything remarkable about them. Evidently it is the same everywhere. I never saw a more villainous-looking set of men, judged by their portraits, than the new German Government. I can not imagine the German people trusting them, in any private transaction, as far as they could see them. Yet in a public way they seem to think they are trustworthy. The theories of Lavater, Spurzheim and Gall may be carried beyond reason, no doubt, but nevertheless facial conformation and expression mean something.

*15 July* – Three years ago I was in Paris over Bastille Day. What impressed me most was the lack of joyousness in the street celebrations. They seemed to be very perfunctory. It struck me then that nationalism can not be a natural sentiment, or it would not need so much pumping up. Apparently there must be a crisis of some kind, actual or manufactured, every so often, in order to keep it going. This is very manifest in America. It takes an enormous amount of money, and continuous effort by interested persons, in order to keep up even a semblance of nationalist sentiment. A Presidential election, for instance, is fantastically expensive, and involves a huge deal of herculean labour, and even so, a great many voters, about half of them, I think, do not care enough about it to go to the polls.

My own belief is that nationalism and centralized government are getting on their last legs. Conditions in

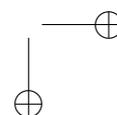
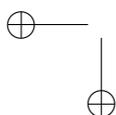


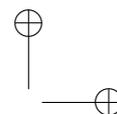


the British Empire, Germany, even in France, as well as here, seem to show that they are nearly played out; the margin of diminishing returns is against them. This is quite natural, for no one really cares much what happens outside his own immediate bailiwick. Not that he is to blame for this; on the contrary, his interest and affections are by nature like his voice – they will carry only so far, and there is as yet no machinery like the telephone to give them a longer effective radius. Hence nationalism and centralization are unnatural, and must go the way of all contrivances that do not correspond with nature.

The Frenchman makes a distinction between the *patrie* and the *république*. The *patrie*, when all comes to all, means his particular cabbage-patch, and in an emergency he will get behind the *république*, for if he does not, the invader may break through and raid his hen-roost. At other times he cares very little about the *république* or what it does.

Another proof of the artificiality of nationalism is in the way people stick to their traditional designations. Normans, Bretons, Savoyards, Burgundians, Provençals, Basques and Gascons think of themselves as French only secondarily. So in Germany. In the Low Countries the sentiment is even more sharply local because the city-State was so long the sovereign unit. I have been out of Italy too long to make a guess, but I would like to know, really, how far nationalism there has supplanted the traditional sentiment for the old local autonomy. Cavour and Garibaldi did not get far with it among the masses, and if Mussolini has done any better, he is a wonderful fellow, *ein kolossaler Kerl*.

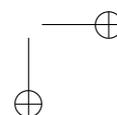
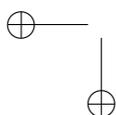


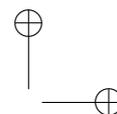


*17 July* – It is sad to see everything blistered by the protracted drought, and no sign of rain; especially sad here in the South County of Rhode Island, where for some reason the vegetation is so uncommonly diversified and profuse. All the “garden-truck,” carrots, beets, lettuce, will not grow beyond babysize – they have had no growth for a month. Leaves are dead beyond recall, and foliage is taking on the look that it has in the tropics.

*19 July* – A French journalist is quoted as saying in *Liberté* that “Americans are the only people who have passed directly from barbarism to decadence without knowing civilization.” This is extremely well put, and I believe that it is true; at least, I know of no other people who have done so.

*20 July* – Things in Germany look bad at this distance. The new government, which is making use of Hitler, seems bent on a Napoleonic absolutism. In turn, this government is the agent of a crew of post-war industrialists and landowners, stupid, obstinate and scared out of their senses by the spectre of Communism. Their idea is to enforce a consummate industrial exploitation, *vi et armis*. This is my impression of the situation, but it must be said that I have not been in Germany for a year, and if I were there now I might see other important factors that have cropped out lately. If I am right, the prospects for civil disturbance over the whole country seem good. Nevertheless I do not think French imperialism will yield to the temptation to annex any territory on the pretext of pacification. That sort of thing is about played out; it does not pay, and nations are beginning to discover

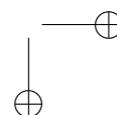
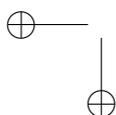


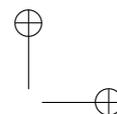


that it seldom has paid, in the long-run. It has almost always cost more than it came to, when everything was finally reckoned up.

*21 July* – An acquaintance of mine, a Frenchwoman, has been commenting to me on the curious tolerance that Americans extend to a casual sexual promiscuity, as compared with their intolerance of a sincere sentimental attachment that by force of circumstances, or for some competent reason, is irregular. In France, she says, it is the other way. But this is simple. Each nation tolerates what it understands, for comprehension is always more than half way to sympathy. A drunken party, with participants only casually acquainted, having met perhaps for the first time, wandering off in couples to carry on sexual intimacies of whatever degree – this would be incomprehensible in France; in the first place, French society does very little in the way of getting drunk. On the other hand, a romantic attachment showing evidence of sincerity and having some reason behind it, is quite well understood there, and is likely to be accepted at almost any level of French society.

I am more and more struck here in America with the apparent absence of both intellectual interest and romantic interest between the sexes. Their place seems to be taken by sexual attraction in the first instance, and subsequently by mere use-and-wont. I can not imagine anything more completely unsatisfactory, especially to the women; for while American women do not attract me as a rule, I have seen evidence of great and beautiful susceptibility to both orders of interest, on the part of a good many; a susceptibility quite beyond the

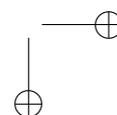
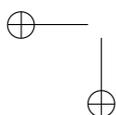


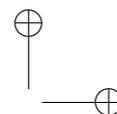


American man's power to meet and satisfy, or even to understand. Perhaps disappointment and discouragement on this ground is largely what leads American women to improvise so many factitious interests for themselves. Certainly, as long as this state of things prevails, the complaints of precisian churchmen against divorce and sexual irregularities are so much wasted breath. In the absence of intellectual interest and romantic interest, the relations of men and women can not rise above a very low level, and the tone which these relations give to society in general is correspondingly uninteresting.

The average of such relations is seen uniformly in America, as far as I have been able to observe. The extreme is probably in the relations of the typical American easy spender with the women of the chorus or cinema whom he keeps on his pay-roll. If I were going in for that sort of thing, I would follow Zola's example and take a housemaid. One might do very well in that way, and might in time build up an attachment relatively quite satisfactory. But then, on the other hand, the man who picks women of the standard Hollywood type would not know what to do with a promising housemaid, so the account is even. The sad part of the situation is the misfortune of the American girl who is in spirit neither Hollywood nor housemaid. She is in the worst kind of bad luck with respect to male companionship, and I suspect that there are quite a good many of her, if the truth were known.

*22 July* – The Disarmament Conference at Geneva is adjourning after some months of talk, having accomplished exactly nothing. It is an amazing thing that anyone

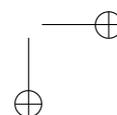
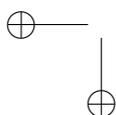


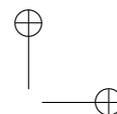


should be found to take this odious nonsense seriously, but there is no accounting for the adaptability of the liberal – professional-liberal – mind. Walter Lippmann came out yesterday in the New York *Herald Tribune* with a screed that was typical of liberalism’s best. His first paragraph acknowledged that the conference had done nothing; and he then went on to say that no one should complain of this, because “the conference itself has been a great achievement.” To have kept fifty nations talking amiably about their vital interests without coming to blows “is in the broad perspective a unique performance.” Well, just why? Talk, at the taxpayers’ expense, is surely cheap and easy. It is impossible to characterize Mr. Lippmann – he is a liberal, and one says of liberals as Josh Billings did of some class of people, I have forgotten what, “I presume they lie without knowing it.”

*23 July* – Seriously, revolutionary agitators might learn a great deal about the philosophy of revolutions from reading Dumas’s novel, *Ange-Pitou*. The exposition which he puts into the mouth of Gilbert is thoroughly sound; as also is that of Balsamo in his colloquy with Marat, in the *Memoirs of a Physician*. One particularly likes the observation that destroying the prestige of monarchy is more to the point than destroying a monarchy itself. That is applicable to all governments. At the present time governments are doing so much to undermine their own prestige that it is about all their press can do to keep it cobbled together.

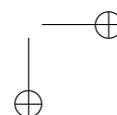
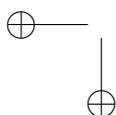
*24 July* – I was talking yesterday with a journalist, for years the Sunday editor of a large city paper, and before

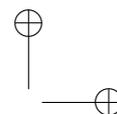




that he had gone through all the ranks of the profession, I imagine. He has been laid off for more than a year by illness, but is now recovering. I asked him if he kept up with the news, and he said he never read a line of it. "When you get out of the way of reading it," he said, "very soon you don't miss it." This observation interested me as falling in with what I have long believed, that no one actually cares much what takes place outside his immediate bailiwick. Newspaper-reading is a pure habit; it argues nothing for the extension of either our interest or our sympathies. My belief is, too, that it is as bad and debilitating a habit as one can form. Either one is or is not taken in by what one reads. In the first case, one is debauched; in the second, one is outraged.

*26 July* – I refer again to the remarkable book called *An Englishman in Paris*, published by the Appletons in 1892. I have never read a more honest, intelligent and clear-sighted view of the Second Empire, the Commune, French republicanism, the character of popular leaders and the character of the French populace itself. He says, on the outbreak of the revolution of 1848, "From that day forth I have never dipped into any history of modern France, professing to deal with the political causes and effects of the various upheavals during the nineteenth century in France. They may be worth reading; I do not say that they are not. I have preferred to look at the men who instigated those disorders, and have come to the conclusion that had each of them been born with five or ten thousand a year, their names would have been absolutely wanting in connexion with them. This does not mean that the disorders would not have taken

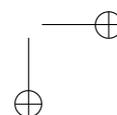
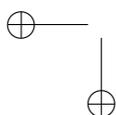


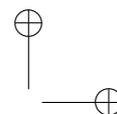


place, but they would have always been led by men in want of five or ten thousand a year. On the other hand, if the Orléans family had been less wealthy than they are, there would have been no firmly-settled Third Republic; if Louis Napoléon had been less poor, there would have been in all probability no Second Empire; if the latter had lasted another year, we should have found Gambetta among the ministers of Napoléon III, just like Emile Ollivier, of the 'light heart.' 'Political convictions in France are based on the fact that the louis d'or is worth seven times as much as the three-franc écu.' This is the dictum of a man who never wished to be anything, who steadfastly refused all offers to enter the arena of public life."

Nothing could be more just or clear-headed than this view. It is applicable everywhere, as far as I know, that politics exist.

*27 July* – Like the author of the foregoing, in any circumstances where politics were involved, I have always "preferred to look at the men who instigated them." Ever since Americans began to take more interest in foreign affairs – that is to say, with the outbreak of the war, eighteen years ago – the accuracy of my predictions in almost every international situation has astonished a great many people. I really never had any other guide (except a good general knowledge of what the situation actually was, a rather better knowledge, I think, than most Americans, even those in public life) than my estimate of the people concerned, and the knowledge of what I would do in their place if I were like them. I believe that if guided in this simple straightforward way, one reaches a

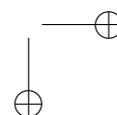
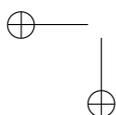


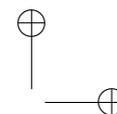


correct conclusion nine times out of ten; I know I reached it much oftener than that. I asked myself only the one question, "Suppose I were an Englishman (or an Italian or Japanese or whatever nationality were involved) and a crook, what would I do in these circumstances?" The conclusion has come out according to my answer to that question, with almost unfailing regularity.

*28 July* – I have read Dumas's Marie Antoinette series with a great deal of interest and respect. I had never read them before, and hence never gave Dumas credit for half the intelligent perspicacity that he must have possessed. I have spoken before in these notes of his remarkable philosophy of revolution, as shown in the first two novels of this series, and I here speak of it again as shown in *Madame de Charny*. What good could come of a revolution in the United States, the people being what they are? Not even the uncovenanted mercies of Providence could bring anything but appalling calamity out of it.

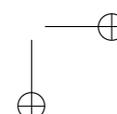
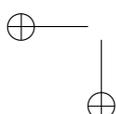
Sometimes people who knew me to be a believer in the economic philosophy of Henry George have wondered that I do not crusade for it or even say much about it. But much more than a sound economic system is necessary; you have to have sound people to work it. You do not give a watch to a child; he does not know how to tell time by it, and would misuse it, either ignorantly or viciously, or both. Our people are incapable of managing even the bad economic system that they have, and it would be utter lunacy to entrust them with a good one. The wise social philosophers were those who merely hung up their ideas and left them hanging, for men to look at

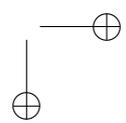
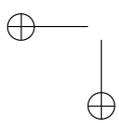
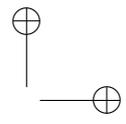
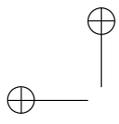


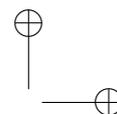


or to pass by, as they chose. Jesus and Socrates did not even trouble to write theirs out, and Marcus Aurelius wrote his only in crabbed memoranda for his own use, never thinking anyone else would see them. They have come down to us by sheer accident.

*30 July* – I have two letters from the heads of Jesuit colleges about my little book on the theory of education in this country. It is a great satisfaction to have them, for as a class the Jesuits are the only people in the United States who would have any idea of what I was talking about, and if the Jesuits praise a work on education, it is sure to be a good one. The head of Fordham sent me Father Brosnahan's searching criticism of Charles W. Eliot's nostrum of electives. The worst calamity that ever befell American education was Eliot's refusal of the presidency of a textile-manufacturing company. It enabled him to hang around the neck of our educational system for forty years, like the Old Man of the Sea. He saw the elective policy in the German universities, came home and introduced it in an undergraduate college (Harvard) whose students had never had anything like the discipline of the *gymnasium*, and could therefore be counted on to make the worst possible use of it. He even urged it on the secondary schools – successfully – and the result is the sweet mess now prevailing.



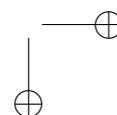
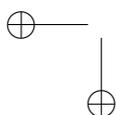




## 1932 August

*2 August* – I am in New York for a week. Curiously, perhaps, I prefer to be there in summer, if I must be there at all. The physical discomfort is great, but the spiritual discomfort is enough less to give a balance. The Club Anonyme is as nearly deserted as usual at this time of year, but one can always count on a few of the most interesting and pleasant of the habitués being around. Riddell (English-man), Frank Day (Australian) and I fell to talking about the difference between the British and American usage of certain common words, such as *cunning*. I do not know how *cunning* got its American sense as applied to a kitten or a baby. Frank Day says that the word *shut* has a bad sense uniformly in America. I never knew that; I always used it as equivalent to *slattern*. Thomas Jefferson uses it so, and that is the British usage.

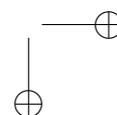
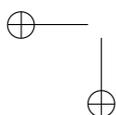
*3 August* – Curiously, for one who has published even as much as I have, I know but few editors, and as Panurge said about the popes, “their sight has not much bettered me.” I have no grievance against editors, as profes-

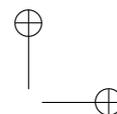




sional writers sometimes say they have; they have always treated my contributions exceedingly well, I should say better than I deserve. My only wonder is that I never got an idea out of one of them, except in such tenuous form as to be hard to identify. Writers tell me that from a contributor's point of view, they are mere mailing-slots, and I would say that this might be so; it would naturally be the case where the actual editing is done by the circulation and advertising departments, as I understand it is everywhere. An editor's work must be intolerable under those conditions, and it is no wonder that our periodical literature is at such a disgracefully low level. I hear that most of our magazines are on the verge of bankruptcy, and I hope it is true; still, their disappearance would argue nothing for the chance of any better ones coming on after them. It is a curious sensation, to be in the lounge of the Club Anonyme, surrounded by magazines, and unable to find more than a trifle of anything worth reading.

*4 August* – I hear some politics talked. My opinion is that Mr. Hoover will have a hard time to get himself re-elected with all the disgruntlement against him, and the incompetence of his organization. The Republican personnel has rotted down strangely in recent years, and very rapidly. I do not know of a man in it who has any ability; the Democrats have several. Up to quite lately it was all the other way. I have a notion that the disintegration began with the Harding Administration; that the crew in the saddle at that time was so uncommonly corrupt that recruiting was impossible. Certainly nothing

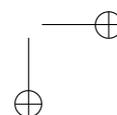
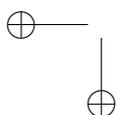


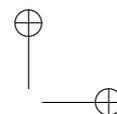
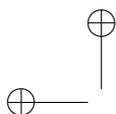


in the succeeding Administrations has been attractive enough to mend matters.

*5 August* – The stock-market is rising, evidently manipulated, because there is not enough improvement in commodities to justify it. As a gambler's market it will be good while it lasts, but I do not think it can be held up long enough to affect the election. The speculators are making what hay they can while the sun shines, however.

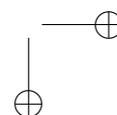
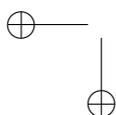
*6 August* – I have been much criticized for speaking of journalism as “a loathsome profession” in one of my books. Just so. A day or two ago a poor young girl from Cleveland killed herself by jumping from a window in a hotel here. She left a note saying she was destitute and hopeless, and her family in Cleveland was likewise destitute. Her note was literate and well expressed. In it she asked the newspapers if they would kindly suppress her name, and say merely that “a Cleveland girl” did so-and-so; she asked this as a favour to her people and friends. It was a naive request, perhaps, but still one does not see how a decent human being would not have respected it, under the circumstances. The thrice-damned creatures who get up the New York papers, however, led off their items with her full name. The English are not easily touched by pathos, but I have some doubt that a reputable English newspaper like the *Yorkshire Post* or the *Manchester Guardian* would have done that. Out of curiosity I have put the case to some Englishry here in the club, and they say not; still, of course, they may be wrong – they are not newspaper-men, and therefore can not be sure.

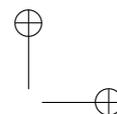




7 August – I have often wondered why some periodical does not start a new plan of reviewing books, on the simple principle that a book worth reviewing is worth recommending. I would have it understood that a four-line review was as much a recommendation as half a page, and that no book that I did not think worth reading would be reviewed at all. I would also try to get as many books as possible reviewed by non-professional writers. It would be quite an undertaking to get this plan under weigh, but I believe it would work out well. The general run of reviewing is perfunctory in the extreme, and I find it hard to read, besides being none too informative.

8 August – William Church drove me back to the South County today, over the old Boston Post Road. We went too fast for sightseeing, but the day was so hot that I was glad to escape train-travel. There is a great deal of beauty in the lay-out of things in Westchester County. I was much pleased with it. We are like the English in knowing how to build slums and suburbs; one goes out of the unparalleled hideousness of upper New York directly into something quite fine. This last week I looked again at the city's buildings, and marvelled at the eye that can see beauty in them. Yet Pennell, whom I so thoroughly respect, seems to have been enraptured by them. I too, see beauty in certain details here and there, but the total effect is purely *ungeheuer*. The Greeks aimed above all at a total impression. I was struck with this afresh when someone showed me yesterday some superb German photographs of the Acropolis, showing how rigidly they subordinated detail to the total effect. The English and ourselves do not understand this – and no more in

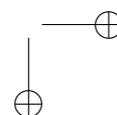
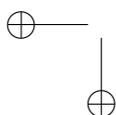


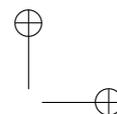
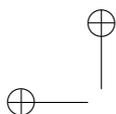


literature than in architecture – the French understand something of it, and did better with it formerly than they now do. We do well, on the whole, with interior arrangement, comfort and sanitation, and so, generally, do the English, though not so well as we. An American or Englishman will build you a very comfortable ugly house in which you can thrive. A Frenchman or Spaniard will run you up something very handsome in which you will probably die.

*9 August* – General Lyautey’s son spent a day here, visiting friends. He is lecturing over at that summer-school humbug in Williamstown, the “School of Politics” that Barney Baruch fathered. I am sorry to have missed him; I hear his comments on public affairs were ingenuous and striking. He was impressed by our government’s way of collecting an income-tax from lawbreakers, and said at once that it was establishing a partnership, which of course it is. This is just the kind of thing that no Frenchman, even the most meretricious, could possibly get through his head, and no wonder!

*10 August* – The locusts have begun to chirr. Their sound gives me always a sense of great heat. I doubt that this is an idea purely associated with the time of year. Boito gets an effect like it out of his orchestra, in the scene in hell, in the introductory measures to Mefistofele’s song, *Ecco il Mondo*. It occurs twice, and I do not know what instruments he uses to bring it out. It impresses me as a very hot sound – that is the only way I can describe it. I think Boito’s opera is very great, far ahead of Gounod’s and Berlioz’s. I suppose it is a little too good ever to be

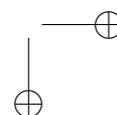
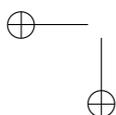


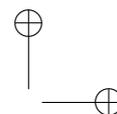


popular; rather a musician's opera. The best conception of Mefistofele I ever saw was Didur's; Chaliapin's, I thought, was poor. He makes Mefistofele a sinister and terrifying figure, which does well for Gounod's idea of him. Didur made him a swaggering sort of creature, who even at the last you knew is not going to be kept down very long.

*30 August* – I have been roving and idle for several days, on an unexpected outing, part of the time with Cassandre and her friends over on Nantucket Island, and part with my old friend Charles Nagel at his summer place on Buzzard's Bay. Nantucket is the most attractive place I know on this whole seaboard. It is isolated enough to have kept its character, and inaccessible enough not to be overrun by riffraff. The old town of Nantucket is charming; the inhabitants have had sense enough not to over-improve it. The domestic architecture is superb: Henriette, Cassandre and I had a charming ramble through some of the best streets, and looked particularly at the three brick houses belonging to the Starbuck family. I am told that all these fine houses were built by artisans, not by architects; like many of the French Renaissance chateaux. There must have been more good taste in such matters than the period usually gets credit for.

I stayed at Siasconset, where Fred Howe has carried on for many years a sort of summer rendezvous for a very decent crew of "emancipated minds." He got me there to lecture, ten years ago, and it was there I first met Cassandre as a lovely youngster, very grave and silent. I had not seen Fred for a long time, and the sight of

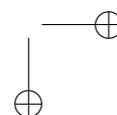
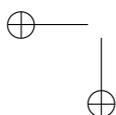


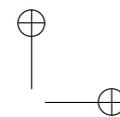
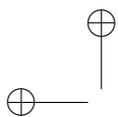


him was good; he has changed little in ten years. We talked about public affairs for a few minutes, but found nothing cheerful to say, so we soon reverted to pleasanter matters. He sees nothing more interesting ahead of us than I see. I was very happy with the four girls, but who could help being happy with them?

The Nagels have a patriarchal type of establishment, a group of excellent houses set in the woods on the coast, all occupied by relatives and relatives-in-law. There are thirty children on the premises, running wild and apparently never giving any trouble – charming children, such as I have not seen in a great while. It is a great privilege to see family life of this type; I had thought it must be extinct. One notices the effect produced on the children by regular association with high-minded and highly-cultivated elders. One especially notices the effect produced on them by hearing good conversation carried on in good, pure, competent English.

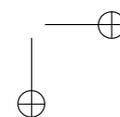
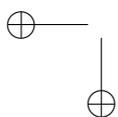
Charles Nagel, a lifelong Republican party man, is distressed and embarrassed by the state of public affairs. He has heard of several prominent Republicans who are going to vote for Roosevelt. That will do no good. I wish fifty men, irrespective of party – men of Charles Nagel’s prominence and character – would unite on a non-political manifesto on the state of the country with respect to *civilization*. That might do some good in the way of “disposing our people to a better sense of their condition,” which Burke says should be the aim and object of all elections, but which never is of ours. I privately doubt whether fifty men of affairs could be found with intelligence and character enough to put out a document much above the Wickersham report, or that

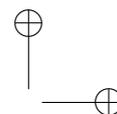




five hundred people could be found in the whole country who would either know or care anything about it if it were put out.

*31 August* – A most fierce and devilish cold attacked me suddenly, making me cough myself into actual weakness. It was like one that seized me in Luxembourg three years ago, which lasted about two days in great violence, and then left me as abruptly as it came. I am very miserable, but curiously, my head is clear and I am not indisposed to work.



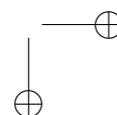
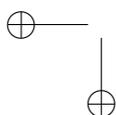


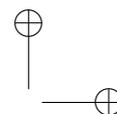
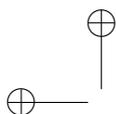
## 1932 September

*1 September* – The eclipse was not total here, but there was darkness, and a cold wind – a very weird effect. I saw birds who were evidently puzzled by it; they seemed undecided about going to roost. Today is the worst I have seen in Narragansett this season; everything reeking with the atmosphere of a stewpan. My glasses kept continually fogging this afternoon, so that I worked with difficulty.

*2 September* – An intolerable day, worse than yesterday. Storms all around us, which did no good, and I went to bed in air like that of a Turkish bath, but could not go to sleep, so got up again. Sir Edgar Speyer once told me that in his boyhood thunderstorms were counted on to clear the air, and actually did so, but that nowadays, the air is denser after them than before. It seems to me that I notice the same phenomenon, and I wonder whether there is any actual difference.

*3 September* – I got an invitation by mail to join the Communist party; it was signed by Sherwood Anderson, Harry Dana, and others. Now, what possible good could

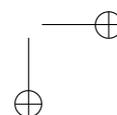
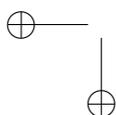


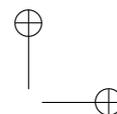


I do the Communist party, except to point out the danger that in their régime's preoccupation with economic well-being, its ideal of civilization might become lowered and coarsened? That would not interest them. What interests me is *civilization*, and I have done all I could to promote it. All that makes me a single-taxer is that the single tax is the best start towards civilization; but I have never propagandized for it, because our people would not know what to do with it if they had it. No system is worth anything unless it is intelligently administered; it is a mere piece of mechanism, and those who have it in hand must know how to run it. Conversely, under intelligent control, one system is very nearly as good as another.

By the same mail I got Mr. Stimson's last speech on the Pact of Paris, the one that has irritated the Japanese; and also a circular from the miserable fellow in Chicago who publishes *Who's Who*, asking me to buy his book, in which I have steadfastly declined to appear. That is my idea of a profitable mail to start the day with – Stimson's speech, a circular from *Who's Who*, and an invitation to join the Communist party!

*4 September* – I have been looking over the fiction-writing that is done for our "quality" magazines, trying to put myself in the place of the minds that are supposed to like it. I am struck by the attitude that the writers seem obliged to adopt towards their subjects. Tourgueniev wrote about peasant life, but never tried to identify himself with it for purposes of narration. Dickens was always superior to his characters. Romance permitted that. These stories of mid-Western farms and Georgia

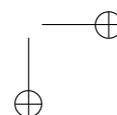
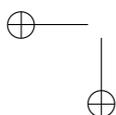


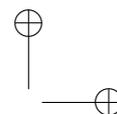


crackers strike me as merely drab – drab and uninteresting, because an artist’s resources of sympathy and delicacy of feeling are not brought to bear on them. The writer has to take either what J. T. Adams calls the mucker pose, like Mr. Hemingway or Mr. Dos Passos, or the reportorial pose, like the regular run of our professional fiction-writers. I suppose this is merely evidence that the masses are quick to resent the bare suspicion of superiority on the part of anyone. Even a writer must be as much as possible like themselves, to be accepted. There are some apparent exceptions to this, as when the *Cosmopolitan* prints Mr. Galsworthy, but these, I think, are only apparent. A good test would be for Mr. Galsworthy to submit some work to the *Cosmopolitan* under an unknown name.

*5 September* – Labour Day weather! I have remarked for years how the worst weather of the whole season comes at this time, just as people are returning from their vacations, the schools opening, etc. When I was working in New York, 1920–24, I always stuck it out until mid-September before I took a vacation, and I have since wondered why people do not generally adopt that plan. Here in Narragansett nearly everyone is ill and dragging around with small ailments, and it can be no better in the cities. A bad start for the winter’s work, and for anything I see, it could be easily avoided.

*6 September* – I have been looking over some of William Jay Gaynor’s letters and speeches, and have been impressed afresh with the sense of what an extraordinary man he was. No one in my time understood so well the

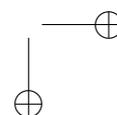
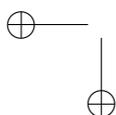


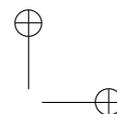


function of a public servant under a republic. I have a notion to write an article about him, and call it *The Last American*, for he seems to have been that; the last, at any rate, in public life. Some think he might have been impressed into the Presidency, in place of Wilson, if his wound had not impaired him. I doubt it. He himself said not, and he always meant what he said. It is interesting to speculate on his probable attitude in the Presidency towards the war. One certainly can not see him behaving as Wilson did. I wonder whether the newspapers will have anything to say about him next year; he died in 1913. I was in New York on the day of the extraordinary popular demonstration at his funeral. I remember very well how the poor people of the East Side turned out at break of dawn to go down to the City Hall where his body lay. This was spontaneous. Gaynor never had flattered them, never played up to them, but they had found out in some telepathic fashion that he was for them.

*8 September* – Well, Walker is out, and McKee is trimming the budget. So far, so good! Tammany is in a corner, for the moment. The effect on the national election remains to be seen. One thing is certain: that Tammany will be in full swing again in four years. I do not recall its ever being kept down longer than that. Like the Roman Church, its organization is unbeatable in the long run, and largely for the same reasons.

*9 September* – The corn has grown higher this year than I have ever seen it. I went by several fields of it today, on the shore road north of the Pier, and noticed that

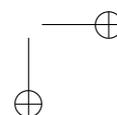
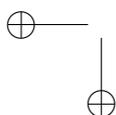


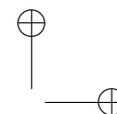
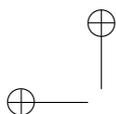


the stalks seemed almost uniformly over six feet. This is unusual. I notice the same thing in the case of both garden flowers and wild flowers; all the autumn growth runs uncommonly to stalk. I do not notice that they are the worse for this, and all the native corn I have eaten seems to have eared out very well. I wonder what the cause of this would be.

*10 September* – I believe we are wrong in following the purely zoölogical classification of human beings. Our social and political theses should be based on a new category. Not everyone who answers to *homo sapiens* is human; relatively few are. As a matter of fact, we do make just this differentiation, because we test and judge “human nature” by its best products. The trouble is, we do not base our practice on this differentiation. There is a greater difference between Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Sophocles, and the man of the crowd, than there is between the man of the crowd and the higher anthropoids; but in our institutional view, Socrates and the man of the crowd alike count one. This thesis would play the old Scratch with republicanism and with the whole order of our social doctrines and arrangements, but I have a notion that it is sound. This line of thought was suggested to me by Dr. McConnell’s little book called *Immortality* – an extraordinary piece of work. I am not trained in science, so I can not say how sound its science is; but I am immensely impressed with it.

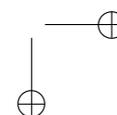
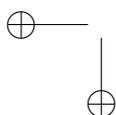
*11 September* – I have been reading Walter Eaton’s books on the theatre of twenty years ago. They are made up of the reviews that he used to write for the New York *Sun*.

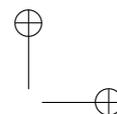




They were to me an astonishing index of the degradation of our literary life. It is almost incredible that within my own lifetime any newspaper would publish such work, and that any reviewer competent to supply it could have been found. I do not know where anything like it exists today, or could exist. Eaton's dignity, his fine sense of his position, impartiality, freedom from crotchets, thorough scholarship, urbanity and kind temper, and over all the grace, correctness and ease of his delightful style – there is workmanship for you! All I ask is that people who say my criticism is only an old man's *laudatio temporis acti* would put Eaton's work side by side with the reviews in any newspaper of the day, and tell me honestly what they think.

*12 September* – Gandhi is going to starve himself to death in protest against British policy in India. The British will not understand that, but the Indians will. The British are exactly like us in their inability to understand that a nation may have a moral grievance against them so strong that no amount of material advantage will quiet the sense of it. We think that if we offer the Latin Americans, for instance, good trade-terms and a lot of hifalutin talk, they will be friendly and loyal. They will not. They may be glad of the trade-terms, but that is all. When Hoover went down there they did the polite thing by him as a drummer, but nothing changed their view of the society he represented, or their distaste for it. They see our society as characterized by a low type of intellect and culture, a low type of manners, beauty, conduct; they see that those things which interest them do not interest us and that we do not respect them. It

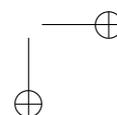
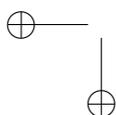


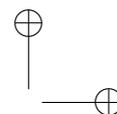
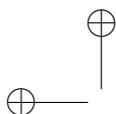


is precisely a moral grievance of this kind that stands between the Indians and the British.

*13 September* – It is interesting to see that consistently, ever since the German Republic was established, the only interpretations of Germany to America have been made by German Socialists, pacifists and Jews. They do all the lecturing here, and inspire all the news. Consequently every development in Germany has taken all America by surprise. I notice now that Curtius, Brüning's Foreign Minister, is coming here to lecture, so we shall get another big dose of how evil and villainous the present government is, and how dangerous is the reaction towards the régime of the Old Gang. Well, I am not so sure of all that. I should like to hear a little testimony from other German sources before I swallow it whole. Perhaps a good many Germans think it is high time that the government asserted itself a bit. I would think so if I were a German.

*14 September* – Nicholas Murray Butler has just put out a fine discourse on Government and Liberty. It might have had some effect about thirty-five years ago, but at present it merely covers the well after the baby has fallen in. I am afraid no one realizes that today's job is revolutionary, not simply one of adjusting and tinkering; and who is to do it? I see nobody except those whom Gerard called the real rulers of America, for they are the only ones whose opinions our public has been trained to heed, and they seem utterly ignorant. Discontent has been pretty well bought off for the last two years, but there are signs that we are coming to the end of money

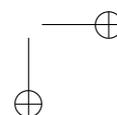
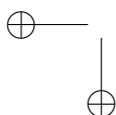


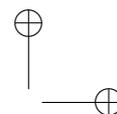


for that. I feel that the outlook is by no means good, at the moment.

*15 September* – The recent storm brought down seven inches of rain, the greatest rainfall ever measured in this State, I hear, but this seems to me probably an exaggeration. After one day, it came off into wonderful weather. I notice again that nearly everyone has left Narragansett, notwithstanding the next two months will be the best time of the whole year. The same thing takes place on the French Riviera. Last Spring I noticed that everything closed up just as one would naturally be wanting to go there.

*16 September* – People here in Narragansett make their own entertainment largely nowadays, I observe. Instead of amusing themselves with something they have to pay for, they stay at home and play games with their guests, and often do nothing but talk. These are people, too, who say they have not lost anything by the “depression.” I wonder whether this is at all general in the country. It seems a very wholesome and interesting change. I hear that the other evening some people played a variant of Twenty Questions, and were well amused by it. If the depression lasts long enough, people may become much more self-reliant and less restless in these ways, which would be a good thing. Germans amuse themselves immensely with simple parlour games. At Neuenahr three or four years ago, I saw a lot of well-to-do-looking people, mostly middle-aged, playing what we used to call Going to Jerusalem, in the hotel parlour. They were very merry over it. One sees them at parlour games on

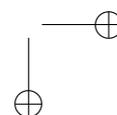
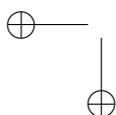


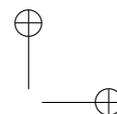
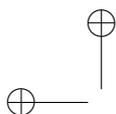


German ships. We may find out that there is a great deal of unsuspected fun in entertainment that we work out for ourselves. I have seen very young infants turn away from expensive toys to see if they could find an old nail or a piece of string or something that they could manipulate more on their own, and use a little inventive power on.

*17 September* – The old snuff-mill on Gilbert Stuart’s birthplace has just been “restored,” I think by the State Historical Association, or maybe by local effort. It is an excellent piece of work, by whomsoever done. In connexion with this, I discovered to my great surprise that a great deal of snuff is sold hereabouts, and generally throughout the country. Who would have thought it? One takes for granted that if a thing has disappeared from one’s own view, it has disappeared entirely. I dare say a great many people still wear high shoes, though I never see them. I was quite sure William Travers Jerome was dead, but I see by the papers today that he is very much alive. I remember making the same mistake about Chauncey Depew and Simeon Ford, because they had been for some time out of the news.

*18 September* – The only question about this new German government is whether its domestic policy has any patriotic intentions. For my part, I doubt it. I have all along felt that it represents an element which is merely tired of seeing German production exploited for the benefit of foreigners, and wishes to exploit it for itself. That is my estimate of Brother Hugenberg and the industrialists. A strong and “patriotic” foreign policy is quite consistent

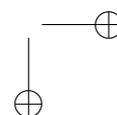
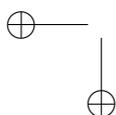


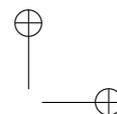


with a very unpatriotic domestic policy; in fact, it is natural for the two to go together: Nevertheless, it is a good thing for a German government, at this stage of international affairs, to put its back up high and stiff. It tends to clear matters, to deflate humbug, and particularly to show up the League of Nations for what it is and has all along been.

*20 September* – Dr. Bell writes me that St. Stephen's College will probably blow up in February. I have no regrets. It should have gone thirty years ago, with its character intact. There is no place in this country for an institution of that kind, or for the sort of people it would turn out. Hopkins of Dartmouth has been talking about a perverted sense of democracy "which encourages public opinion not only to be ostentatiously arrogant in its indifference to intelligence and antagonistic towards any process of thought in its leaders which rises above its own average mental capacity, etc., etc." Pretty tardy! J. S. Mill said it much better, long ago. If a hundred college presidents published a manifesto on what really ails education in this country, and then resigned in a body, something might begin to happen.

*22 September* – An old acquaintance has just come along who makes bookbinder's cloth up in the Hope Valley somewhere. His business is still flat, though textiles generally have come up, especially wool, on account of replacement buying. He says people have not got around to buying books yet. Interesting! I am told that throughout the war, German book-production never



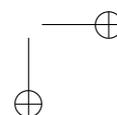
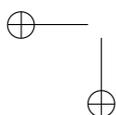


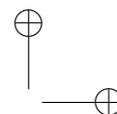
slackened. That is exhibitory of the difference between a civilized and an uncivilized country.

*25 September* – The Mercury asked me for an article on Gaynor, which I have just done, called *Notes on a Great American*. I wish I might be able to publish a series of them. There should be a proper biography of Gaynor. A first-class literary treatment of him would be a great classic. The subject is there.

*27 September* – The Faculty of Medicine at Johns Hopkins has asked me down to speak on the 400th anniversary of Rabelais's publication of the *Pantagruel*, next month. Writing the speech is great fun. I shall try to have it published somewhere. Perhaps the Baltimore *Sun* would do it. Certainly none of our literary periodicals would. At the height of the war, Paris celebrated the centenary of Ernest Renan. Poincaré, then Premier, made a superb speech; so did Barthou. I calculated that if the New York *Times* had given proportionately the same space to the celebration that the *Temps* did, it would have devoted twenty-seven pages to it. There is another index of comparative civilization; and as I said, at that time France was straining every nerve in the worst of the war.

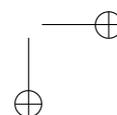
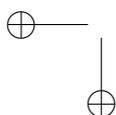
*28 September* – L. B. came in for dinner, a delightful companion, delightful in mind and in character. He told me things about Yale that are simply past belief. At one time they were going to dismiss Willard Gibbs from the faculty, but somebody made an impassioned speech for him, saying it would never do to let out such a good Yale man who was so well connected. So they kept him, not

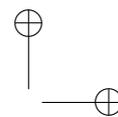
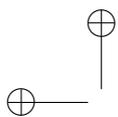




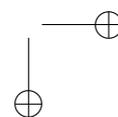
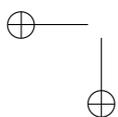
because he was almost beyond doubt the greatest mind in theoretical chemistry that ever lived, but because he was a loyal son of Yale and of a good Connecticut family. Gibbs could not get his work published for a long time, except by getting it into the journal of a society over there that recorded the doings of the first families. Hence now the back numbers of that journal are ransacked out of libraries for the sake of some little ten-line note by Gibbs, sandwiched in between the report of a houseparty and the account of some parvenu's new mansion, or something of the kind. As Joseph Pennell was always saying, Golly, what a country! To this day, I don't believe there are fifty Yale alumni who could tell whether Gibbs was a chemist or a Latinist, at the price of their souls. Mention the name of Gibbs to a European man of science, and he will get down on his hands and knees. At a meeting of some association here not long ago, somebody happened to mention that he had been a pupil of Gibbs, and instantly every foreigner deserted all the college presidents and windbag dignitaries, and made a dead set for him.

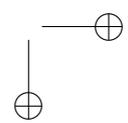
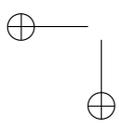
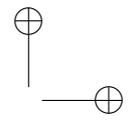
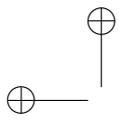
*29 September* – Off for New York this morning, for my sins. I hear that people are more cheerful down there than they were when I was there last, and I am a little curious to see why – if it turns out to be so. There must be more or less replacement-buying this fall – one's clothes and shoes do not last forever – and perhaps this, with the diversion of the campaign, serves to brighten things up a little.

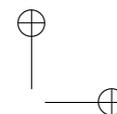




*30 September* – McKee, the acting mayor, is surely going to be off-loaded. Too many notions of economy. They tell me the city is nearly bankrupt, and that the banks are about to refuse further accommodation. I'll wager Tammany will sink the ship rather than consent to cutting down expenses. They know what government exists for, just as well as the precious crew down in Washington, and they propose to get theirs, come what may. It is an old story, and nobody should be surprised at it. The politician, of whatever stripe, simply does not know what taking his hand off an appropriation means.

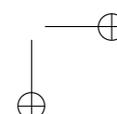
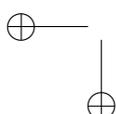


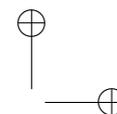
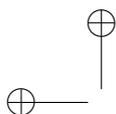




## 1932 October

*1 October* – Sam Merwin tells a curious story. When he was a young man, James McNeill, the lawyer, made no bones of the suspicion that the assassination of McKinley was procured. Two circumstances do give some colour to this. First, McKinley was known to have given it out that he was on the point of going back on his high-tariff policy, and recommending a cut on some of the extravagances of the McKinley tariff. Then, too, it is a curious thing that no connexions were ever established for the assassin Czolgosz; he was apparently without relatives, friends, or even acquaintances. None ever appeared. This would be the case if he were what gangsters call a “punk.” Of course, too, the tariff is all there ever was to the Republican party – “the cohesive power of public plunder” is all that has held it together. McNeill said that “those who did not think the course of history was continuous” in such circumstances, were much mistaken; he referred to the Borgias, etc. This would be an interesting thing to run down, if possible, but no doubt it could not be done now.

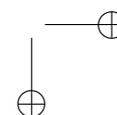
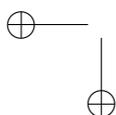


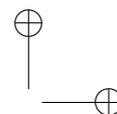


*2 October* – I notice that the official list of banks who are in on the largesse from the four-billion-dollar reconstruction fund, gives them all as rather small banks. What about the big ones? Are none of them in on it too, or are they in on the quiet? I would like to know about Dawes's bank in Chicago. Has he had 42 million dollars slipped to him? There is no way to get at those people. Of course, the whole idea of that fund is an absurdity. No governmental board has the organization to manage such a sum competently, nor above all, has the character to manage it properly. My belief is that most of the money will be stolen, and most of the balance wasted, as far as any public benefit is concerned.

*3 October* – My mother's birthday. Mine is on the 13th, and we used to celebrate both together on the 3rd. It would have been a lonesome kind of day but for Cassandre, who spent most of it with me and made it cheerful, as she does every day that brings me the good luck of seeing her.

*4 October* – Why do not the newspapers print the day-to-day index of unemployment under a standing head, like the weather-reports? They publish a chart of the stock-market every day, and unemployment is as important as the stock-market. In the early 'nineties the newspapers passed from the control of politics to the control of "business," and if they are to be judged by the company they keep, it is hard to tell whether American business or American politics is the more utterly degraded. At least, when the papers were controlled by politics they had more strength and character, and more ability behind

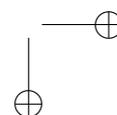
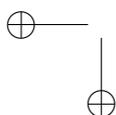


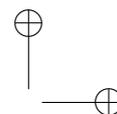
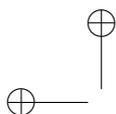


them – editorial and literary ability; the modern paper has more business ability back of it. As far as other qualities go, they have not changed much. So I think probably a little “edge” goes to Dana, Greeley, Godkin, etc., over the later product.

*5 October* – T. told me today that the London literary world is ever so much more a stock-market or brothel than ours. He is lately back from there, horrified at the state of things. He says the solidarity of cliques, the shamelessness of log-rolling, beat anything he ever dreamed of, and that for disinterestedness and honesty our book-reviewing is far out of sight beyond theirs. My own opinion has long been that our literary world gives little to complain of in these respects. Our book-reviewing is usually amateurish and dull, rather shabby, but I find it surprisingly honest, and I never saw reason to believe that publishers bring any pressure to bear through advertising, in order to get good reviews. There are cliques, of course, but they seem not to be at one another’s throats. As for log-rolling, it is usually so amiable and extravagant that I doubt it does much harm. I am entirely out of the literary world and perhaps do not see what is really going on, but that is the way it looks to me.

*6 October* – I notice that last sentence I have written. Probably it is my instinctive dread of organization that has kept me out of the literary world, and out of the other forms of social and political organization that I have now and then touched. Every person of any character, I think, wants above all to keep the integrity of his

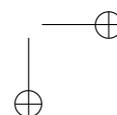
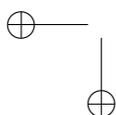


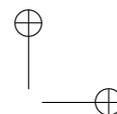


personality intact, and under the idea of organization that prevails in this country, that seems impossible unless one stays out pretty resolutely. I know this is true of our educational organization, and I believe it is true of the literary organization too; and it is notoriously true of the industrial and commercial organization. The point is that there is no respect for personality implicit in our idea, and thus our idea is not intelligent, and thus again it wastes an enormous amount of valuable power. Curious, that an organization like the Jesuits has more respect for human personality than an American university or business house, but it is true. I have not heard that the Jesuits ever once wasted a single individual, but our idea of organization wastes them as prodigally as nature wastes perfectly good acorns and fish-eggs.

*7 October* – The Democrats are apparently staking everything on popular resentment of Hoover, which is good machine politics. They are not out to commit themselves on a single affirmation of any kind. The thing that convinced me that Mr. Hoover is “through” is that he has for two years now been the butt of low wit all over the country – wit of the mouth-to-ear kind, usually obscene. When that happens, a man is invariably done for. Well, it is justified in this case, if ever. Mr. Hoover has shown himself all his public life as absolutely nothing but an incarnation of *la bassesse de l’homme intéressé*. I have seldom seen it so pertinacious and at the same time so unrelieved by any offset, in any human character.

*8 October* – That phrase of Renan’s that I see I cited yesterday, is superb. It is perfectly translatable, but

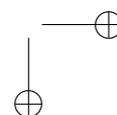
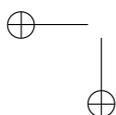


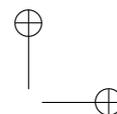


seems more striking and forceful as it stands, for some reason; perhaps because I have an alien ear. I dare say *the baseness of the interested man* would strike the cultivated non-English ear quite as forcefully. I remember many years ago, one of my Italian acquaintances, I think it was Count Pasolini, spoke of the beauty of certain English words, for instance *pavement*. He thought *pavement* was an exquisite word, for sound. I believe I can see how he might think so, but it takes a little effort. The word would not occur to me naturally and spontaneously as beautiful.

*9 October* – Sam Merwin says that the depression has cured us of false pride about being poor or broke. I am not sure but that this is merely a change in the basis of false pride. A good many people seem to me as ostentatious of poverty as formerly of wealth. In other words, it may be the fashion to be poor now, as formerly it was to be well off.

*10 October* – Amos Pinchot and Fred Howe are in politics again, helping elect Roosevelt. They are both a trifle older than I am, much more experienced, and should have cut their eye-teeth thirty-five years ago, at least, when I cut mine. I can not understand the eternal springing up of hope in the breast of the politically-minded. I know Fred and Amos well and admire them sincerely. They are noble fellows, and on all other matters highly intelligent, of an entirely different ilk from that of O. G. Villard and the late Jake Riis. They know fundamental economics and fundamental politics, in the abstract. Yet, here they are, like a couple of men looking at a walnut-tree and

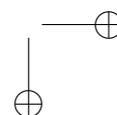
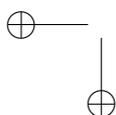


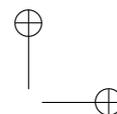


saying, “If we put in some work helping this tree grow, maybe by God’s grace and a streak of luck, it will bear oranges.” I am sure neither of them have the scent of the Federal fleshpots in their noses, even though Fred did hold a small job under the Wilson Administration. They are above that sort of thing, if anybody is. Evidently to some people the stir and bustle of practical politics is habit-forming, like cocaine or whiskey. I can not account for it in any other way.

*11 October* – With all the handling that the Adams family has had, no historian or biographer, as far as I know, has clearly marked out the quality that really distinguished them. None of them, from old John down, seems ever to have been afraid of anything, least of all afraid of what the neighbours would say – neighbours in society, in business or in politics. Think of Charles Francis Adams, saying in the Boston of 1885 that he was a single-taxer, and whoever did not like it might lump it. This quality made the family stand out against that curious unreasoning fear that is the characteristic mark of the upper-class Bostonese – the fear that killed Sacco and Vanzetti. I hear Chinard’s book on John Adams is coming out next year. I hope it will do justice to this quality.

*13 October* – My birthday, and life is still interesting, though I notice the scope of its interest is more sharply restricted with each year. One gets rid of an enormous lot of excess-baggage as time goes on, and is glad to see it go. I suppose I must seem pretty callous for never willingly going back to any of the places or the few remaining

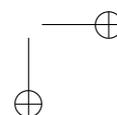
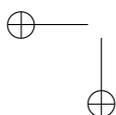


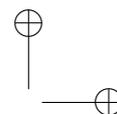


people which would recall my early life at home with my father and mother and their entourage. But that is only because that life was so pleasant and is now gone; I do not wish to be reminded of it or to think of it more than sometimes one must. I could dwell wholly in the past, with fatal ease, but it is disabling. "When the dead is at rest, let his remembrance rest; and be comforted for him when his spirit is departed from him."

*15 October* – I hear the theatre talked about a good deal, but feel no temptation ever to go. In the last five years I have not seen five plays, I am sure. One would think theatre-goers might get bored with plays (and novel-readers with novels) that merely serve up to them a slice of their own life, and one almost invariably cut from its drab and dull side, at that. The function of the ποιησις is to give us a truce from that sort of thing. When glamour and romance are restored to the theatre, I will go again. I want to be impressed by what George Sand called "the ideal life, which is only man's normal life as he shall some day come to know it." A great sentence, that, and a great truth.

*16 October* – It is a disagreeable surprise to see street-walkers about New York again. Coming here seldom and at long intervals, I notice it. I saw none when I was here last; in fact, I have seen none for over fifteen years. The men at the club say street-walking is prevalent now, and has come in sight suddenly, due to the depression; though coming so late in the depression as it has, it would seem to be a last resort. The girls I have noticed throwing eyes at men seem not to have been long in the professional



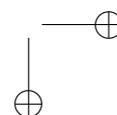
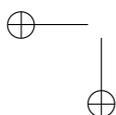


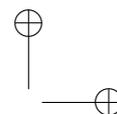
class, if at all. Well, all that is civilization, I suppose; it represents progress, so one ought to be satisfied. Wasn't it Mr. Rockefeller, jr., who some years ago talked to his Sunday-school class about the number of buds that had to be sacrificed to make an American Beauty rose? That is the idea.

*17 October* – One of the books that I have long wished to see come out is here – Professor Sakolski's history of land-speculation in the United States. It is very good, as far as it goes, well documented, none too well written. It is enough, however, to give a view of the leading motives that actuated most of the Founding Fathers, and were bequeathed to their children unto the third and fourth generation. Professor Sakolski is not much of an economist, which loses a little force for his work, but one is glad to see this beginning of study of a highly important and altogether neglected side of our national history.

*18 October* – A falling stock-market seems to clarify and stimulate thought. When it is rising, nobody cares to know why or how, but when it falls, everyone is very eager to know all about it, and yards of explanation come out in the newspapers from pundits in our colleges and the investment departments of our banks.

*19 October* – A long talk with Otis Skinner about dramatizations. *Tartarin* was attempted once, he said, but was not good because it was too elaborately constructed, and did not content itself with putting Tartarin on for character only, or almost so – i.e., with just enough plot

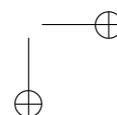
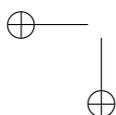


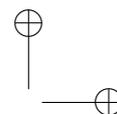


to hold the thing together. Skinner agreed with me that character is pretty nearly all there is to good drama, e.g., Shakespeare. I think the same thing is true of fiction. Who cares about the ramshackle structure of the *Pickwick Papers*? In our own day the *Potash and Perlmutter* stories are most villainously constructed, but again, who cares?

*20 October* – Nobody seems to know whether the bankers are using their whip-hand over Tammany or not, in the effort to keep New York from following Chicago into bankruptcy. Nor does it yet appear how far Tammany will withdraw its proboscis from the city's veins. The bankers certainly can bring the organization to time, if they choose; Tammany can not pass the buck to any agents, as Ford did when he was under pressure from the banks. On the other hand, nobody knows what Tammany may have "on" the banks, and whether it figures on their standing a little more or less polite blackmail, for the good of the cause.

*21 October* – Somebody in one of our colleges, I see, has sent out a questionnaire to discover the basis of choice on which people buy books. According to the returns, the great majority buys on personal recommendation – from hearing somebody's opinion. What interested me was that only one on the whole list bought on the strength of an advertisement, and only one on the strength of a review. This is about what I should judge would be the case. I have often wondered why publishers should pay advertising rates to keep up things like the *Times's* and *Tribune's* book-sections, and Canby's *Saturday Review*.

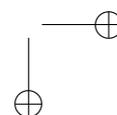
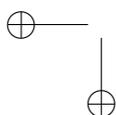


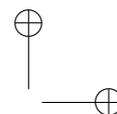


In my opinion it is a sheer waste of money, and I know a publisher or two who agree with me, but I suppose none of them has the backbone to give it up unless all would consent to do the same, like the nations facing the question of disarmament. Perhaps they feel that advertising and reviews start people to talking about a book and thus make sales indirectly, but I do not believe there is anything in that idea.

*22 October* – Today I went by the buildings that are up at the Radio Centre. It strikes me that that enterprise is a fitting monument to our national lunacy of the past fifteen years, and will be found to be just that, with its appropriateness as clearly demonstrated as though it had a frieze of jackasses' skulls over every doorway. Certainly if the buildings that are already up make their rent, they will bankrupt everything within a quarter-mile radius. Either I am uncommonly obtuse, or that undertaking is a piece of colossal foolishness.

*23 October* – I doubt that Mr. Hoover has changed many votes by his eleventh-hour foray in the field. I think he has merely enabled those who meant to vote for him to become articulate and make copy for Republican journals. But what astonishing things he says! His declaring that we were ever within a week of going off the gold standard is equally preposterous, whether you take it as a knave's lie or a fool's blunder. Now, just where was there a likelihood of anything like that, and why? Yet I heard a supposedly capable man of business echo that rumour which he had "heard down town" at the time last summer that Mr. Hoover refers to. My opinion of the New York

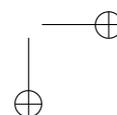
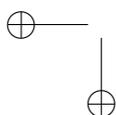


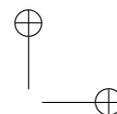
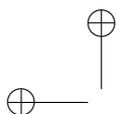


business man's nerve is very low. I was in Germany in 1924 when the mark went out of existence. I was in France when the franc went from five to the dollar down to eighteen. I have seen what real trouble is, and I can fancy how tight the New Yorker's tail would stick between his legs if he once got a taste of it.

*24 October* – There is an interesting change in the cartoon of late years. Back in the 'nineties and earlier, its main fault was sentimentality. This has now entirely disappeared and has been replaced by cynicism of a distinctly juvenile type. The incidence of the cartoon has also changed. Those of the old *Life* and *Puck*, for instance, were for adults; those of the *New Yorker* are for adolescents, a degree beyond the comic strip. I am speaking of the social cartoon, not the political; these are still addressed to the adult mind necessarily, though it must be said that they do not presume on its quality. In this respect the difference between the cartoon in America and in Holland, Italy, Germany, and even in England, is still pretty spacious.

*25 October* – On my way to New York again, from the South County, this time driving down with William Church. Stopping for lunch near Guilford, we notice the curious abuse of the word *guests*. Innumerable hot-dog stands and overnight-quarters along the way have signs out for *guests*. The English and we are in a discreditable sort of rivalry in nasty-niceness about words. They have even lately invented the word *nursing-home* to take some of the curse off going to the hospital, and we have countered with terms like *realtor* and *mortician*. Yet

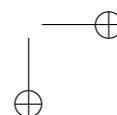
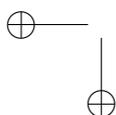


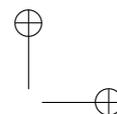


there are odd inconsistencies about this. Apparently *guts* is now a good word for print and the parlour, when used as a synonym for *courage* or *pertinacity* but not otherwise. Mention of *gut-ache* or a *pain in the guts* would probably be met with raised eyebrows in our politer society. I am glad to have lived as long as I have in the Low Countries, where the forms of speech are very direct, and where thought is equally direct.

*26 October* – One would give a good deal to know what proportion of the cost of our roads is paid by those who use them, and what proportion by the public at large. Coming down over the Boston Post Road yesterday, I thought it looked pretty expensive, and that there was probably a considerable inequality in the way the burden of construction and upkeep is shared. At a venture I would say that the motorist is getting rather too much the best of it; or, speaking more strictly, that “business,” i.e., the makers and salesmen of motor-cars, is being rather too tenderly considered, as it always is when its interests do not fall in completely with those of the general public.

*27 October* – The poor old eighteenth-century political doctrine on which our republic is supposed to have been founded, is certainly coming in for hard treatment these days. I have been reading Ortega y Gasset’s book again, and notice his saying that “the majority of men and women are incapable of any other effort than that strictly imposed on them as a reaction to external compulsion.” It seems pretty sweeping – I am not so sure as all that. I would go as far as Henry George in saying that

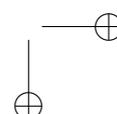
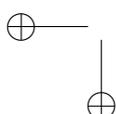


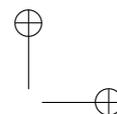
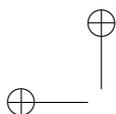


“man tends always to satisfy his needs and desires with the least possible exertion.” That seems to me a more philosophical expression of what is, I think, the same idea. Speaking of George, now that Roosevelt has dug up W. G. Sumner and the Yale Press shows signs of life enough to republish his writings, I should think someone might soon be rediscovering Henry George. If so, he will find that George was one of the first half-dozen minds of the nineteenth century, in all the world.

*28 October* – At Baltimore last night, attending the Faculty of Medicine’s celebration of the 400th anniversary of the publication of Rabelais’s great work. It was one of the finest and most pleasant occasions I ever participated in. The Johns Hopkins has always bred a great deal of true civilization, and the results show, even though I hear that of late years it has been going mostly on momentum in this respect. I doubt that any other American university could assemble such a gathering for such an occasion.

*29 October* – At lunch with Henry Mencken yesterday. What I heard from him, and from Hamilton Owens yesterday morning, concerning the public schools of Baltimore, made me wish someone would write a perfectly dignified presentation of our educational practice in the light of a racket. It is time that somebody went after the scandalous organized rascality in our educational system. If the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching would undertake such an investigation in any kind of sincerity, it would almost justify its existence. Mencken said he believed the United States would never become

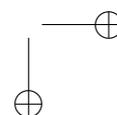
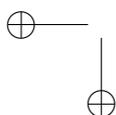


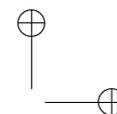


civilized, if for no other reason, on account of its schools. I quite agree with him. Cassandre has an interesting notion that some peoples are cut out by nature to be civilized, and others not; and that those which are not can never be civilized or ever succeed in civilizing themselves. She points out indications in history which rather tempt one to believe that.

*30 October* – It might not be a bad idea for the Library of Congress to begin a collection of skeleton speeches for Congressmen. It would save time and trouble in going over the same old ground every little while, and probably no one pays enough attention to Congressmen's speeches to detect any structural similarities that might appear. This scheme has worked pretty well, I believe, for sermons; there has been quite a number of skeleton sermons put on the market for the use of fatigued or incompetent preachers, and I never heard that congregations objected. If it answers for preachers, it surely should do for Congressmen.

*31 October* – I have been looking over the biography of Henry George, by his son Harry, a painstaking sort of book. The best one can say for it is that it is competent. There should be a better one, for George was undeniably a great man. Two things strike me. First, that George should have spent so much energy in all sorts of crusades that one could see were either doomed to be fruitless, or if successful were not worth the price of a great man's time and strength. I can not help thinking that if he had not always been so desperately poor, he might have taken another bent. Second, I am struck with

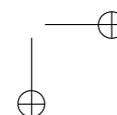
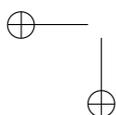


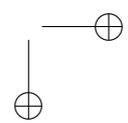
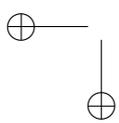
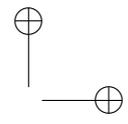
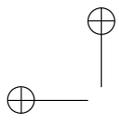


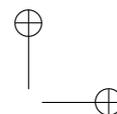
the kind of argument that was effective half a century ago – argument based on abstract justice and the idea of natural rights. No one could get anywhere with such arguments today. It is interesting to read the excerpts from George’s public speeches and imagine how flat they would fall on a modern audience.

There is a grim irony, as things have turned out, in the fact that if George had been accepted, he would have been the saviour of what we so absurdly call the capitalist system. His justification of interest is absolutely sound. If he were accepted now, even, there would be a big salvage for the system, enough to let it weather through. But there is not intelligence enough in our “ruling classes” to see which side their bread is buttered on, so they will have to reckon with some form of collectivism instead – probably Marxian – just as Herbert Spencer prophesied.

The single tax was discredited because it so promptly fell into the hands of crusaders, whirling dervishes, who rushed it into politics, and thought to promote it by political methods. Their millennium was just around the corner. But politics can only register an idea, at best, and this one ran so far ahead of popular understanding and conviction that there was nothing to register. The proportion of a population capable of taking in a new idea is about two per cent per year, maximum. George’s biography makes it clear that he knew singularly little about human beings and the working of their minds. Nevertheless something might be done with the fundamentals of his doctrine today, if the right people took it in hand.



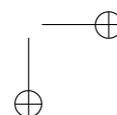
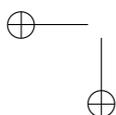


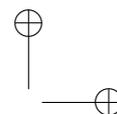


## 1932 November

*1 November* – I never knew a family that had as many proverbial expressions as my mother’s family, most of them quaint, and many that I never heard of elsewhere. For instance, my mother used to say that a suspiciously good bargain offered “too much pork for a shilling.” When some occasion was over with, she would say, “That burying’s got by” – a simile drawn from rural interest in funeral processions, people stopping work to look at them. To justify some small extravagance, she would say, “What’s a shilling on a show-day?” I have often thought of jotting down these sayings as they recur to me, and making a list of them. Curiously, I never heard a single one that pointed a conventional moral, like those in Poor Richard’s Almanac; but perhaps this is characteristic of a notably free-thinking, clear-minded lot, as my mother’s people all were, without exception.

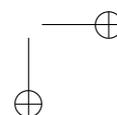
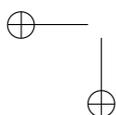
*2 November* – Cassandre told me of going up to the North Point lighthouse on Nantucket last summer, and finding that they use oil for their light; electricity is too uncertain. There is an odd sort of allegory in this. Modern devices

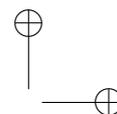




are convenient and work first-rate when things go all right, but sometimes when you want something you can rely on, you have to go back to the old-fashioned method. This may also be true of certain modes of thought. In a pinch, some of them still look pretty good, and are found capable of doing work at which later modes have broken down. We had a brand-new system of economics ten years ago. All sorts of old principles were shelved, supply and demand, Gresham's law, the law of diminishing returns, etc. Well, we are looking them over again, now, and they don't seem so bad. Also we are considering the old idea that goods and services can be paid for only in goods or services, whatever you choose to use for counters, whether gold, silver, paper or the shirt-tails of East Side Communists. Some day, if we can only keep on going to pot, we may find it worth while to learn what rent is, and interest, and wages, and why; what capital is and what monopoly; what the three factors in production are; and what laws govern the distribution of wealth among monopoly, capital and labour. I would bet my head that you could take this list of questions from one end of Wall Street to the other, and into every college and university in the country, and not find ten persons in the whole lay-out who could answer them properly to save their souls from Tophet.

*3 November* – What a real sorrow Don Marquis's affliction is! I went in the Club Anonyme the other night and met John Phillips leading him downstairs, stone-blind, stricken suddenly while playing pool with Charles Francis. He is a noble fellow, finely gifted and such a game spirit, a real Pantagruelist. It makes one thoroughly sore that



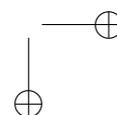
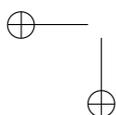


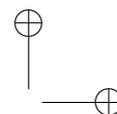
our civilization has no better use for such a talent than to condemn it to waste itself on a trivial newspaper column. He has written charming verse that no one appreciates and hardly anyone has read, simply not understanding his appearing without his cap and bells. The doctors say he will recover, but nobody knows what that means. I wish we did know, but we can only wait and see.

*4 November* – Up in the Litchfield hills, after a day in the back of Dutchess County. Glorious country, and the foliage at its best, the oak-trees showing bronze all over the hills. Walked up back of Salisbury, nearly to what they call Mount Riga, an ambitious name for a fine hill. I find that by keeping on a way further, one would come to some pleasant lakes, but I did not know it in time.

*5 November* – One has the roads quite to oneself, except the through highways where one would not care to walk, anyway. This is the time to be in this region. It must be utterly dreadful here in summer. Walked from Lakeville across to Falls Village over a hill road – delightful! Tried to get back by another hill road to Salisbury, but could not pick the trail up before it got too dark to go on, so returned to Falls Village and got a motor-car to carry me to Lakeville.

*6 November* – I remember Cassandre saying that when you go through our countryside you can see that Americans have no true love for the land, as the French and Belgians have. They have a monstrous passion for grabbing and looting it, but no love for the actual soil. This struck me as a very just and keen observation. Our

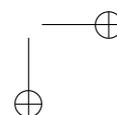
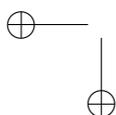


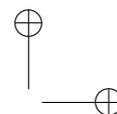


show-places make me think of some ex-Follies girl, all decked out, on the arm of a veteran of the cloak-and-suit business; they have that air. By contrast, the old-style New England house is peculiarly gratifying to the sight, but those I have seen are mostly on the coast. The New England farm property, however, though it may be attractive and prosperous-looking, does not show evidence of real love for the land.

Wherever I have been, I have always found waterfront people the most interesting. It is so in this country, and in such European countries as I know. For interest, one would close out everything between the Atlantic seaboard and the Pacific at thirteen cents on the dollar, and throw in everything on both coasts south of San Francisco and Charleston, for lagniappe. Speaking for myself, everything north of San Francisco might go too, save for two things – climate and water. The Puget Sound country has a grand asset in climate, and water soft as silk. When I was out Seattle and Portland way, years ago, I used to stand under a shower at all times of day or night, for the pleasure of it. But I found that region, as Artemus Ward found Salt Lake City, “a 2d Soddum and Gomorrah, inhabited by as thievin and onprincipled a set of retchis as ever drew breth in eny corner of the Globe,” and their doings were devoid of interest to anyone save the unscrupulous go-getter, so like Artemus again, “I girded up my lions and fled the seen.”

*7 November* – This district abounds in good hotels and inns which provide first-rate food, except that where I have been they seem to go uncommonly strong on lamb.

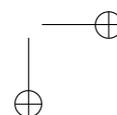
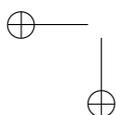


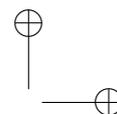


They serve me so much lamb that I begin to think they must take me for an Armenian, and probably expect me to begin peddling shawls and bogus jewelry around the villages. But I shall disappoint them. Over in Millerton there is a little inn that sets the best table I have found in many a day. Commercial travellers make a point of stopping there. In Europe, as in America, the drummer is the one safe guide for travellers to follow. I have done it for thirty years in every strange land, and he has never failed me. The freemasonry of the craft keeps his information fresh every trip, and he may be depended on with confidence.

*8 November* – Election Day, far better spent here in the country than down in town, saving the republic. You are reminded that neither Mr. Roosevelt nor Mr. Hoover can bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, or guide Arcturus with his sons. Whichever may be elected, the cows will still calve, and seed-time and harvest will recur. I once voted at a Presidential election. There being no real issue at stake, and neither candidate commanding any respect whatever, I cast my vote for Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi. I knew Jeff was dead, but I voted on Artemus Ward's principle that if we can't have a live man who amounts to anything, by all means let's have a first-class corpse. I still think that vote was as effective as any of the millions that have been cast since then.

*9 November* – Early returns portend a landslide, but what does it signify? Merely resentment against Mr. Hoover, which I fully share, for I think he is a base and

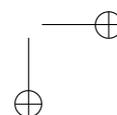
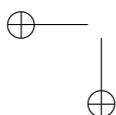


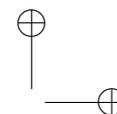


disgusting fellow, but none at all against the structural defects of our political mechanism which put a premium on misfeasances, executive, legislative and judicial. Peter the Hermit himself could not stir up any resentment against these. As long as our people are incapable of the simplest possible process of putting two and two together, I can not get much warmed up over their political misfortunes.

*10 November* – Back in New York, on my way to the South County. Our intelligent and discriminating voters seem to have got four years' worth of bile out of their system on Tuesday, and everybody appears to be more cheerful, which is all to the good. Roosevelt and his ilk have it all their own way; majorities everywhere. Newspaper-writers say they "have a clear mandate from the people." In the name of the Prophet, fiddlesticks! – rats! – tripe! A mandate for what? Well, beer; yes, probably beer, but I can not think of anything else, and beer would have come just as promptly from the Republicans, and for the same reason – as a revenue-producer.

Roosevelt is starting off "an era of good feeling," and he is quite the man to work it for all it is worth; he can do that handsomely. I look for him to lay that kind of pipe for his second term. Unless something pretty catastrophic intervenes, his party can get a long-time grip on the public udder in that way, and I think he knows it. I look for a number of incidental good things from his administration, none the less valuable for being superficial to any actual reforms or changes in principle. As far as these are concerned, he will "carry





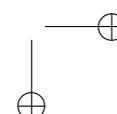
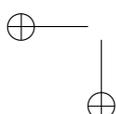
on,” and it so happens that in a good many directions his advantage and his party’s will be on the side of the public’s advantage. Beyond this he will not go, nor can he be expected to go, because he has no mandate to go beyond it. There is something to be said for the professional politician on this point, and I shall put down some notes on it when I reach the South County tomorrow. I would rather like the fun of publishing a little essay about it, but no publication would print it, nor would I if I were an editor, for it would not interest anybody.

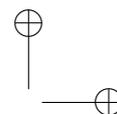
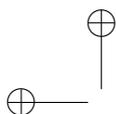
*11 November* – Some random observations:

If the electorate thought so badly of Mr. Hoover, why must it put up with him for four years? The English or French could throw him out in four minutes from the time he failed to command a legislative majority. We all remember the string of French premiers awhile ago, none of whom stayed in office much longer than the time it took to swear him in. Someone said in a newspaper paragraph that the French premiership was one turn around in a revolving door.

Moral: The fixed term is a letter-of-marque for rascality. As long as such letters are issued, why expect any but the right sort of men to apply for one, or having got it, to use it in any but the right way? Also, why expect the people to take a continuous interest in politics, so long as the fixed term makes their interest utterly ineffectual? The sum of it is that government under the fixed term is not representative but delegated.

Again, why should the people be interested in national politics when the whole Executive is irresponsible and

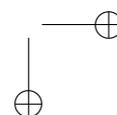
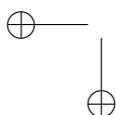


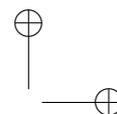


inaccessible. The English Cabinet is chosen from the House, and every member is subject to question. Once when I was in the House at question-time, a member got up, took an envelope out of his pocket, and said, "Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Postmaster-General," who was sitting about ten feet in front of him, "why he did not deliver this letter on time." There you have the idea of an accessible and responsible executive. That sort of machinery invites the interest of the people, while ours repels and nullifies it.

Again, as long as the fixed term and the irresponsible Executive exist, there can be no effective Opposition. A British or French Government has to be on its toes all the time, because there is no telling when the Opposition will take a snap vote on it and throw it out. The people know this and are continuously interested, because there is always the chance of something doing. The American people put a crew into office for a term of years, and then leave them to the lobbyists, because there is nothing else for them to do.

Again, how expect any political issue to be more than a local issue when the Constitution expressly forbids it to be anything else? By requiring representatives to live in their district, the Constitution precludes the consideration of any question by any other than a purely local aspect. If a British legislator disagrees with his constituents, he can stand for any constituency in the kingdom that will give him a majority agreement. Thus he can preserve his own integrity, unlike the miserable fellows who have been drinking wet and voting dry all these years, or who now change their colours as they see the voters in their district changing theirs. Under a

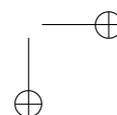
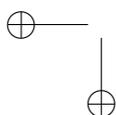


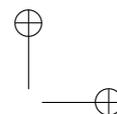
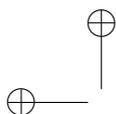


rational system of representation, a dry Rhode Island Congressman who fell out with his people would go and get himself nominated for some safe dry district in Maine or Kansas.

Again, by the same provision, the Constitution forbids *principles* to be brought out before the people, and how can the people be expected to show interest in a politics that shelves principles? No Congressman can discuss any question on its merits; he must discuss it “for Buncombe,” with an eye on the people at home. The British legislator can; if his constituency does not like what he says, he can try his luck with another.

This same provision, moreover, makes the United States the only country in the world that is forbidden by its Constitution to have a foreign policy. Every member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, both in the Senate and the House, must subordinate the national interest to the interest of his own bailiwick, or lose his job, probably for good. Hence, with every change in the Committees, a new set of paramount interests is reflected, and our foreign policy is, as it has always been, a mere improvisation. How can a people be asked to respect such an arrangement for compromising our national credit? Again, why trouble oneself about the character of Congress, since it is not the supreme legislative authority? The British Parliament is supreme, and the Englishman knows it. What the House of Commons says goes, even for the king on his throne. What the United States Congress says goes only on the sufferance of nine old cranes on the Supreme Bench, who are really the supreme law-making power in the land – not law-interpreting, but law-making – and who are absolutely

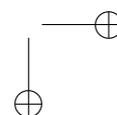
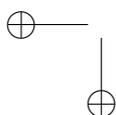


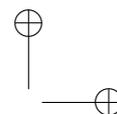


inaccessible and irresponsible. No one can get at them; the united will of the people can not get at them in any legal way. Everybody knows these things. Everybody knows that the whole of our political mechanism is as remote from the control of the American electorate as Japan's is. Under these circumstances, the instinct which makes the American take only a sporting interest, or at best a punitive interest, in a national election, is a sound one. Why try to elect a Socialist administration? I have not heard that the Socialists, or any other party, propose any structural change in our governmental mechanism.

But I am quite sure that our people are satisfied with the mechanism that we have. Suppose Mr. Roosevelt wrote a message, calling attention to these structural peculiarities, and asking for a Constitutional convention to straighten them out, would the people approve of it? I think not. Suppose Mr. Gerard's fifty-seven "rulers of America" should get out a manifesto to the same effect, and make it the charter for a reconstructed Republican party, would the people back it up? I think not. So the whole thing comes down to Burke's fine saying that "there never was for any long time a corrupt representation of a virtuous people, or a mean, sluggish, careless people who ever had a good government of any form."

*12 November* – There was a raging storm here three days ago, with a violent surf that broke over the seawall at Narragansett. Yet the oak-trees and larches managed to hold on to a great deal of their exquisite bronze foliage. Looking at them this afternoon in the high, clear light, I thought Rembrandt, Bol and Koninck might well have

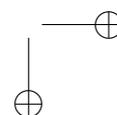
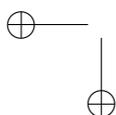


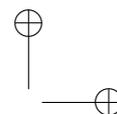


been here and got their notion of a prevailing colour from them.

*13 November* – It is odd that the three Presidents of our great jazz-and-paper era all came to a bad end. Wilson perished miserably; Harding died under suspicion of suicide or poison; and Coolidge is still writing trivialities for the mass-production magazines.

*14 November* – Almost overpowered by incalculable weakness and depression; can not persuade myself that I shall last the winter out, yet I suppose I shall. Writing this reminds me of the abrupt and terrible entry in Gray's diary, *Insomnia crebra, atque expergiscenti surdus quidam doloris sensus*. If something interesting would take place in the world, one could pick up, but there is no sign of anything. The Dark Ages must have been a grand gorgeousness of gaiety and sparkle compared with the intellectual life of the last fifteen years. One understands Bonstetten, the volatile Swiss, who dragged along for years with one foot in the grave until the French Revolution broke out, when he suddenly perked up, and was younger and livelier from sixty to eighty-five or so than he had ever been; he died at eighty-seven, just a century ago, in 1832. But one must carry on, whether anything interesting happens or not. People tell me that this is an interesting time to be alive, and if you measure interest in terms of raw sensation, it may be; but measured in any other way, I can see no interest in it. No development of any kind is being directed; politically and socially too, the world is merely marking time. Even a deliberate and courageous retrogression would be interesting, but



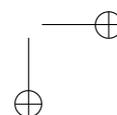
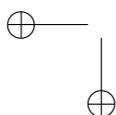


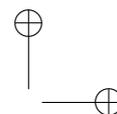
everyone seems to be afraid to think so, and they go ahead like an actor on a moving runway, walking very briskly but staying in the same place, as God does when he walks the earth in *Green Pastures*.

*15 November* – The British and French lost no time serving notice that they want “reconsideration” of the war-debts. They know as well as we do that we can’t collect them, so that is the whole story. I am on record fifteen years ago that we would be left holding the bag for that war, and here we are. I am not sorry, for our going into the war was an egregious crime and folly, and we should jolly well pay for it. The only just retribution in our people’s power is to search out every living promoter of that iniquity, Congressmen, Cabinet officers, diplomats, financiers, industrialists, and boil them in oil. This might be some satisfaction for the bill we have to pay – a small one, but something.

*16 November* – Apparently the jobseekers are forming by brigades, platoons and army Corps, and gossip about Roosevelt’s Cabinet is going around. I hear the usual prominent names spoken of, Young, Smith, Baker, Ritchie, etc. I have not heard Walter Lippmann mentioned; he ought to have a good job. He gave Roosevelt a good leg up with the voters, and should be rewarded.

All this makes one wonder what it is that makes public office seem desirable. Think of the crew that we have seen come and go these past few years – and where are they now? You connive and squirm and shuffle and lie your way along to a candidacy, not daring to say your soul is your own; then for a little while you are Mr. President or

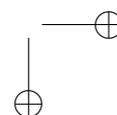
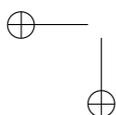


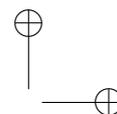


Mr. Secretary or something of the kind, then are turned out and forgotten, then finally die and go to hell, and that is all. Of course, the answer is that men who will do that are good for nothing else and hence have no better idea of themselves.

Being at the barometer's mercy as much as I am is almost enough to make a man a mechanist. I have not been so dejected, depressed, in months as I was in this last spell, but last night a rain came on, the wind suddenly turned into the west, and I woke up to the bright, clear morning as good as new. I seem to have reached the stage of what the poet Gray called "mechanical low spirits." Thank fortune, they are not continuous yet. Nevertheless, I still say that if something interesting would take place somewhere in the world's economy, I believe the barometer would not count for so much.

*17 November* – I see Ellery Sedgwick has got out the current number of the *Atlantic* consisting entirely of reprinted material. It is the seventieth-anniversary number. That is a good scheme – good for the readers, and the whole issue does not cost him a cent. I have long wondered why the older magazines do not do more reprinting as a regular thing. *Harper's* has no end of first-class material in its back numbers. I doubt if readers would care a straw, but it would probably raise an awful breeze "in the trade." I have often noticed with amusement that editors seem to edit more for one another than for their readers; just as women really dress for one another rather than for men. But editors and women



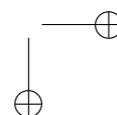
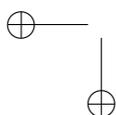


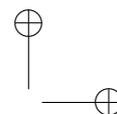
alike would probably pretend the contrary – and I dare say would really believe they were telling the truth.

*18 November* – I resumed reading the newspapers the other day. What a thundering joke it would be if Brother Hoover and his lame-duck Congress would pass a real economy bill, one that would cut a billion dollars off Federal expenditure, which certainly could be done without impairing a single useful function of the government. That would be a lovely legacy to leave to Roosevelt and his hungry horde of job-seekers, for I imagine he would have to accept it. There would be joy in the presence of the angels between now and next March, if anything like that happened. I can't imagine anything more plan-gent than the squeals of a crew of ravenous Democrats side-tracked from access to the trough; and how it would delight me to listen to them!

Apparently New York City is in a little worse way financially than I thought. The question whether Tammany will ease off still remains open; for my own part I continue to doubt it. Easing off would be bad for the organization, since plunder is all that holds it together; and yet the time is at hand when there is no longer enough to go round. Walker, like Coolidge, was smart enough to know when to stand from under, which most politicians are not.

*19 November* – The German-Jew Feuchtwanger, novelist, has just arrived in this country. Interviewed by ship-reporters, he talked like a fool; the report of it in the New York *Tribune* would make a cat forsake her kittens – “America is swell,” and all that sort of bilge. Such stuff

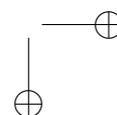
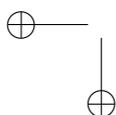


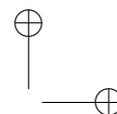


is altogether too common from visiting artists, and if our papers had any self-respect at all, they would refuse to print it. Some say the reporters are responsible, but I hold that the visitors are equally responsible. The only fool questions that a visitor is obliged to answer are those of the Bureau of Immigration and the Custom House. These have a clear monopoly of all the jackassery that can legally be put to a visitor, and the visitor ought to know his rights and stand on them.

It strikes me again as noteworthy that the representatives of Germany who find their way here to spread the light are so largely Socialist-pacifists or Jews, or both. How is this? Who or what is behind it? I have no objection to these brethren, but they are not the whole of Germany, and I would like to hear from somebody else, for a change. I would like to hear what some of the Junkers have to say, and a Hitlerite or two.

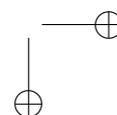
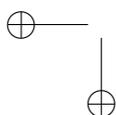
*20 November* – Before I left town, Alfred Harcourt gave me Flynn's new biography of John D. Rockefeller. It is a good careful piece of work, and full of interest. John D. stands out against the plug-ugly millionaire of his day for some things that are relatively creditable, and he should have the credit of them, which Flynn gives him in full. He did not profiteer in the Civil War or afterward, like J. P. Morgan, Carnegie, et al., or work the stock-market like Jay Gould and Fisk. Barring the matter of rebates and drawbacks, he seems to have played the game of business rather more like Henry Ford, and pretty straight, according to his lights. Apparently, too, he always gave his competitors the chance to come in under cover, and gave them a fair run for their money when they did.

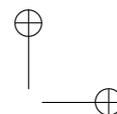
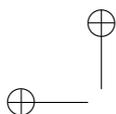




Flynn shows him, however, as curiously devoid of a single quality that we reckon as characteristically human, and I fancy that is true. All his life he must have been an utterly uninteresting and odious individual. Flynn's account of him gives the impression of an energumen mote like Rodin, in Eugène Sue's old story called *The Wandering Jew*, than any other character I can think of at the moment. There is a lot to be said for Rodin, from his point of view, but you would run like a scared dog if you saw him coming.

*21 November* – I am writing a piece for Henry Mencken, suggested by the election. Somehow I can't keep my hands off the magazines, though writing for them is hard work and always an interruption. I swear that each piece is my last, but almost at once something turns up that starts me off again. Bell says I should not give it up; he thinks it does some good, but I am not sure. For one thing, however, quite a few of my essays get lifted into college text-books; one of them has been reprinted that way five times, I think. But, like speeches, they interrupt what one is doing. Arthur Goodrich said something the other day about my going up to Wesleyan to talk about education. He is a trustee. I am pretty well talked out on that subject, but I suppose I would go if I were asked. There is some money in speeches and magazine-writing, but for the sort of thing I do it comes almost to nothing, so that aspect of these activities is hardly worth considering. I think I never published a line in book or magazine that did not cost me more than I got out of it. Still, if this were not the case, I should think there must be something wrong with me. Outside fiction, a



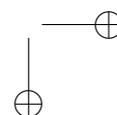
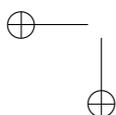


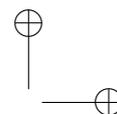
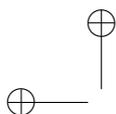
large popular following in any literary field, especially in journalism, is something to be profoundly distrusted.

*22 November* – Providence is a strange place. It has a better apparatus of culture than any American city of its size, I think, and with less apparent effect on the civilization of the town. It has a university, superb libraries, superb collections in almost all lines of art, and it has more first-rate beautiful old-style domestic architecture than any American town I know. Yet as far as any influence on the city's actual life is concerned, one would say that all these things might almost as well not exist. I was up there yesterday, and this impression, which I got years ago, seemed strengthened.

*23 November* – Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. The country should be thankful for the present state of things, and I believe that thoughtful citizens are. If we were to go into the war at all, it would be better for us now to have gone in earlier. If we had gone in when the *Lusitania* was sunk, lost half a million or a million men, etc., we might have been kept closer to realities during the next ten years, instead of being fascinated by a Hollywood movie-mirage. Still, perhaps not. It did not turn out that way after the Civil War, when realities were certainly close and continuous enough.

*24 November* – Bound for New York again. Eavesdropping on the story of a curious variant of the eternal triangle, as discussed by two women on the train. A and B are two sisters. A, the elder, desperately in love with C. C desperately in love with the younger, B, who will

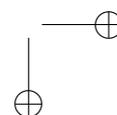
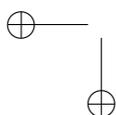


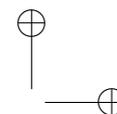


have none of him. A takes C on, declares herself, and lives with him, doing her best to console him and win him over; hopes to dragoon him into marrying her. It struck me as a strange business. B seems to be the only straightforward one of the lot, and the only one likely to come out ahead of the game. C seems to be a very poor wishy-washy affair, and A seems rather a desperate character. I got a good deal of entertainment out of the gusto that the two women put into the story, so I am that much ahead, I suppose; B and I are winners.

If you swear off smoking, you can not succeed; if you swear off wanting to smoke, you succeed with hardly any trouble at all. A and C might have succeeded in swearing off wanting to be in love, while if they tried merely to quit being in love, they probably would fail. Somebody ought to take this as the basic idea for a novel.

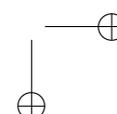
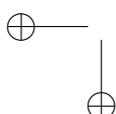
*27 November* – A glimpse of Henriette tonight. I am fascinated by her looks, though I think not many people find her uncommonly handsome, and I know why. She breeds back to her Low Country ancestry, and her face carries the trademark of two thousand years of a distinctive cultural history. Brussels is full of such faces, and they are very scarce in America. Many of our girls have good looks, but seldom show the trace of a traditional stored-up culture; and the most popular type – the musical-comedy, or Hollywood type – is the one that shows it least. I think Henriette is very beautiful, and have told her so, which I think pleased her a little, for she said she seldom heard anything of the kind.

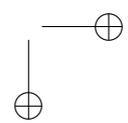
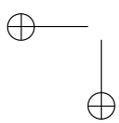
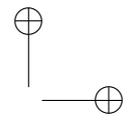
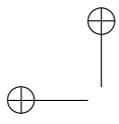


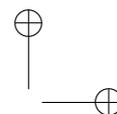


*28 November* – Two interesting conversations yesterday, one at noon at the Round Table in the Club Anonyme, one at night with Henriette and her two friends. Literature at noon, literature and music at night. What made them a little unusual was that we all talked about the things we liked, with not a word about the things we disliked; no invidious comparisons and no one laying down the law. This gives conversation a tonic quality that is valuable in these days when disagreeable topics are perforce uppermost in our minds so much of the time.

*30 November* – Hearing a group of Chinamen talk made me wonder whether there is such a thing as a tone-deaf Chinese. Much of the meaning of a Chinese sentence seems to depend on the pitch given to certain sounds, so if one could not hit the right pitch I should think the meaning would be twisted hopelessly. I must remember to inquire about this.



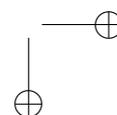
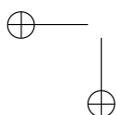


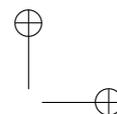
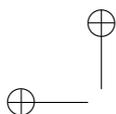


## 1932 December

*1 December* – The theatres continue to do a very bad business. Arthur Goodrich told me that he came out of a show some few nights ago, and found a crowd of two or three hundred people outside. He thought things must be looking up when so many people would be hanging around a stage door to see actors make their exit, but he found that they were waiting to see two or three movie stars who happened to be in the audience that night. He took it as a good joke on him, which was pretty sporting, for he has just had a play fail after a week's run.

*2 December* – Don Marquis let me into a strange superstition. One goes down into the pool-room of the Club Anonyme by a broad stairway of seven steps from the entrance. Don says that every member who has fallen down those steps has died within five days; so whenever he hears of one having fallen down, he goes home and stays away from the club for a week. The only exception, he says, was Edward Simmons, the artist, who fell down those steps and lived for three years. I could believe it, for old Sim was a mighty hard man to kill, beside

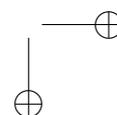
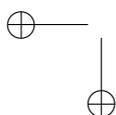


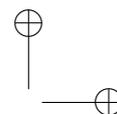
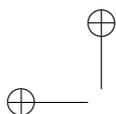


being an exception to every rule that was ever heard of. Sim was a remarkable man in all ways; a great man in his line, and otherwise a sort of dissolute Emerson. He looked enough like Emerson, too, to make one wonder whether there was anything in the gossip that he had some of Emerson's blood in his veins. Probably it was a mere canard; I never heard it mentioned in the club, but I have heard it once or twice outside.

*4 December* – Frank Warrin mentioned being out to dinner with a lady the other night, our discussion being on certain foods and eating-habits. I had happened to hear of this dinner, the lady being an old friend of mine; she spoke of it herself. Frank knew that she and I are old friends, and there was no reason in the world why he should not have mentioned her by name, except the fine old tradition that no woman's name should be mentioned in the club. A few years ago one would not notice this bit of etiquette, but nowadays one so seldom runs across anything of the sort that one remarks it with great pleasure. Probably other clubs have the same tradition, but it is something that makes one rather proud of belonging to the Anonyme.

*5 December* – I went last night to hear Georges Barrère and his little orchestra in a programme mostly of old music. He is doing a fine public service. As an intermezzo, he played the Bach solo concerto. It reminded me of how much the world owes to the fact that Frederick the Great happened to be a flute-player. I think one of the grandest scenes in history is the one at Potsdam, when Frederick abruptly adjourned a meeting of the Crown Council,

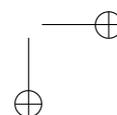
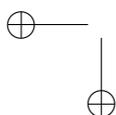


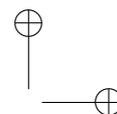
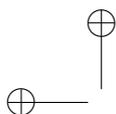


saying, “Gentlemen, old Bach is here.” All business of State was off for the next couple of days, while Bach pounded the harpsichord and Frederick blew the flute, and the world has netted the great flute concertos out of that visit. If I were making a study of Frederick, I would let his military genius go pretty much as it lies, and bear down on what you see of his character in incidents of this kind, and in his letters to Voltaire, for instance. He was a really great ruler, but his military and political achievements are only incidental to his real greatness.

*6 December* – Yesterday the House defeated repeal of the Prohibition Amendment by six votes. We shall be saddled with that Amendment just so long as there is any money and patronage in it. It is not quite the goldmine that it has been, but it still pays. I don’t see why the country discusses this issue, since all there is to it is this one question, Does it pay? The United States can not be realistic about anything – what a people! – except a clear view of the next dollar. I remember how queerly Arthur Ponsonby looked at me when I told him the simple truth that Prohibition in this country was not a moral issue, or fundamentally a political issue, but a vested interest. That was when he was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the first Labour Government; I think he is in the Lords now. I imagine he sees that I was right, though he thought at the time I was pretty cynical.

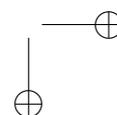
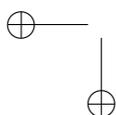
*7 December* – Talking with Frank Warrin about the curious fact that when you are in London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, everything in the world seems near to you, while

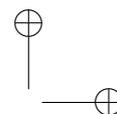
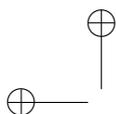




in Washington or New York, everything seems remote. I have noticed that in the Canadian cities one feels less remote than here. In London I feel much nearer San Francisco than I do in Chicago. Frank said this feeling held out as far down the Danube States as Bucharest, but when he got to Czernowicz things seemed about as far off as they do in Boston. I was never down that way, but I can imagine that it might be so.

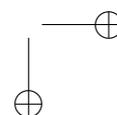
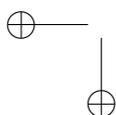
*8 December* – Einstein was put up on the carpet by our consular service, over getting a visa to come here. I have been interested to see how the country took it. It seems that the Woman's Patriotic Corporation served notice on the State Department that Einstein was an undesirable alien – Bolshevist, or something of the sort – and some of Stimson's small-fry passed the word along to our consulate in Berlin. There has been some facetious comment, but no serious treatment of the fundamental question of what kind of State Department it is that takes direction from a flock of meddling fools like the Woman's Patriotic Corporation. It is commonly remarked that this is a woman-run country, but nobody seems to see that it is bound to be, so long as women have their present enormous preponderance in purchasing-power. Women now own nearly half our national wealth, and this with their delegated purchasing-power in addition, gives them control of our whole institutional life. They now control publishing, the church, drama, music, forum, education – none of these can turn a wheel without keeping an eye on the taste and judgment of women. It is a serious matter and bodes no good; their acquisition of this large irresponsible power is too new a thing to be used except

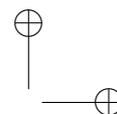
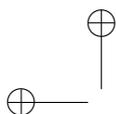




in ways that are for the most part ignorant, whimsical and petty. I would not care to be our ambassador in Berlin when he meets the diplomatic corps after the Einstein incident, though they have been so long used to seeing our representatives in a humiliating position that an incident more or fewer probably does not count for much.

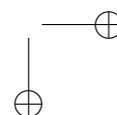
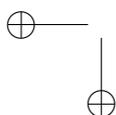
*10 December* – A pleasant young Spaniard named Don Beltran de Garbanzos, or something of the kind; I did not catch it, exactly. His father's name, Don Primitivo de G. What a delightful name, Don Primitivo! Once at lunch at George Bernard Shaw's, when we were talking about theatrical matters, I asked Massingham why somebody had not made a comic opera out of the famous incident of Don Pacifico, back in the 'sixties, I think it was, or a bit earlier. The libretto is all in the history. It does not call for a scrap of invention, and even the title is there, inimitable. (There is a light opera called *Don Bucefalo*; I never heard it.) Shaw whirled around on me, and asked, "Why, who in the United States knows anything about Don Pacifico?" I answered by telling the story of Ouida, the novelist, refusing to see an American woman who called on her. When the servant opened the door, Ouida called down from upstairs, "That's an American voice. Tell her to go away." The woman called back, "You needn't be so sniffy about Americans, for they are the only people who will read your nasty books." Shaw, who likes to have the laugh turned on him, enjoyed this as much as the rest did.

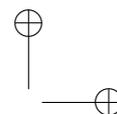
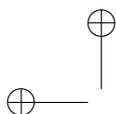




*11 December* – The demand has gone forth for \$20 million for charity in New York this winter. Maybe it will be forthcoming. Count Tolstoy said that the rich will do almost anything for the poor except get off their backs, so probably it will. Nevertheless, one becomes a little fed up with charity. I should think even the rich might pretty soon begin to suspect that justice would pay better than charity in the long run, since charity is becoming so confoundedly expensive. We are paying up now for having been so heavily indoctrinated with the halfbaked ideas launched by people like Jake Riis, and professionalized by any devil’s number of uplifters, “social workers,” foundation-hounds, settlement-sharks, and such like. I shall be interested in seeing what comes of it. Certainly we deserve a noble good sweating for our intellectual dishonesty in regard to these people, not one of whom ever was known to turn a hand for a sound and just economic system which would make charity forever unnecessary.

*12 December* – Someone could write a fine book on the Inn – the Inn as an institution. Dickens gives a faint suggestion of what might be done with it. I have been thinking of the innumerable *Black Eagles* of Prussia, the *Golden Suns* of Bavaria, and so on, and the part they have played in Europe’s development. Plenty has been written about individual inns and their history, but I think the subject has never been treated in a general way. Another good book could be done on the Island, perhaps starting off with a chapter on the Island in literature, and then running off into descriptive work on several islands that have a history or some kind of character that lends

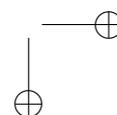
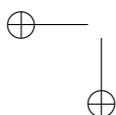


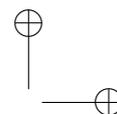
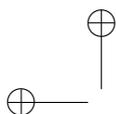


itself to literary treatment. The Island is the only thing I know of that modern life has not stripped of romance; indeed, the weariness and nostalgia bred by modern life have heightened its romantic interest. Almost any kind of book about an island can get a public as easily now as in Homer's time, or even more so.

*13 December* – The country may be saved yet. Rollin Kirby was telling me of a friend of his whose dinner-bill for two persons at a Park Avenue speak-easy was \$74. Arthur Goodrich capped this with a story of a female connexion by marriage whose annual shoe-bill comes to \$5000. Not bad, considering the depression. Also I notice that the society editors seem able to scratch up enough items of “conspicuous waste” to make as good a page as usual in every morning's paper.

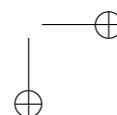
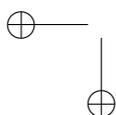
*14 December* – My old acquaintance, Howard Scott, has come into the limelight with a rush, astride the new engineering scheme of social planning that he calls Technocracy. I have known him well for a dozen years, and like him, and I admire the persistence with which he has stuck to his idea until a turn of luck made it popular. I don't know what there may be in it, but I am not yet ready to go out and crusade for it. I have seen many schemes for social planning, and the more complete and convincing the blue-prints are, the surer I am that not much will come of it. I saw the theory of Henry George launched, against which nothing has ever been said, or can be said, and nothing came of it. Marxianism is having something of a run, but its prospects look very dubious to me. My notion is that time is an important

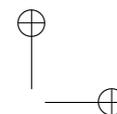
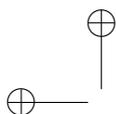




element in education, and that the development of any kind of society which can be called human is a matter of much longer time than most people think. Indeed, if it be true that the mass-man is not a human being, never has been, and never will be, no such society can possibly be developed, and all our schemes for it are visionary.

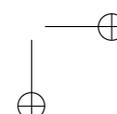
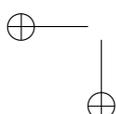
*15 December* – The French Chamber has served notice that it won't pay the debt-instalment due today; and there you are! I am glad of it. England has paid, with a strong demurrer to the effect that payment is a bad thing all round, but ostensibly wants to save her credit. This is all very well, but the fact remains that if Great Britain defaulted, a lot of small nations that owe her money might say that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. I think all the South American countries owe her pretty heavily. Meanwhile Brother Hugenberg has come out in Germany with a warning that our private debts over there must be "revised." Just so. Methinks we shall see but few dollars come in henceforth on those debts, public or private. It is interesting to observe how, from the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, the notion has persisted that the Americas exist only to serve as a milch cow for Europe. That idea prevails in the European mind today – and in the British mind – as strongly as it ever did. We have abetted and encouraged it by sycophancy, official and social, and are getting our comeuppance, as we deserve. Somehow I suspect the incoming Administration will be very Anglophile, though this is a pure hunch. I am pretty sure that in 1928 the British Foreign Office thought it could do more with Smith than with Hoover, and was disappointed in the election. I too

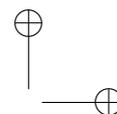
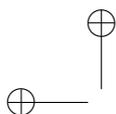




believe it could have done more, even though Smith is a Tammanyite Irishman, for when an Irishman decides to “go good,” like Parnell, he goes very good.

*17 December* – Up in the South County again for a few days, laid out with a vile sudden cold, wretched and unfit for anything. All that takes my mind off my troubles is the *Memoirs of William Hickey*, three volumes – a grand book. Lord, there is history! There is life; life in the eighteenth century, in England, India, Jamaica, Portugal! Hickey gives five lines to the French Revolution, nothing to the American Revolution, and the rest of his book is Simon-pure, every-day life, just what an intelligent reader most wants to know and understand. Historians can never do that sort of thing like a participant. To my way of thinking, our best historical writing is in Justin McCarthy’s *History of Our Own Times*. Some American writers have lately undertaken to write contemporary American history, but they write badly and edit their material with a view to the market. There is a fine field here for a properly-written work like McCarthy’s, but no one to do it that I know of except Charles Beard. Hickey knew how to write English, and wrote it, and so did McCarthy. It is interesting to see celebrated names coming into his pages in an entirely different set of associations from those by which we know them; Edmund Burke, Goldsmith, Cornwallis, Suffren, Burgoyne, etc. Probably very few of us know that Cornwallis and Burgoyne ever did anything but take part in the American Revolutionary War, which Hickey never even mentions. For one thing, Sir John Burgoyne wrote a drama called

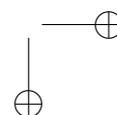
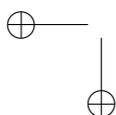


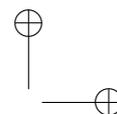
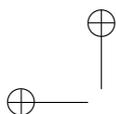


*The Heiress*, which was produced in almost if not quite every country in Europe.

*21 December* – Back in New York again, my cold still hanging on; I imagine vestiges of it will stay with me all winter. Some are saying that the French Deputies, after their grand gesture of default, will pay up. The newspapers here foster that view, but I do not take it. I see no reason why they should pay, since we have no way of collecting; such being the ethics of public debt as distinguished from private debt. One thing I am sure of is that they are quite unmoved by our expressions of shocked dismay; they know our own record of public default too well. They have their own views, and stick to them with great tenacity. They and the Belgians did not fall in with our “new economics” of over-expansion, quantity-production, etc., with which we set out to Americanize Europe some ten years ago, thereby showing the value of a little sense of history. They had been let in by John Law, de Lesseps, and one or two others in a minor way, and the course on which we were heading all so bold and bravely did not look so good. I would like to know the statistics of the wooden-shoe business in France, Holland and Belgium for these last dozen years. To indulge in an Irish bull, a nation that goes around in wooden shoes has its feet on the ground.

*22 December* – Somebody has blown the gaff on the Reconstruction Finance Corporation at last. John Flynn is out in *Harper's* with the story of its miserable doings, with Hoover's rascally connivance, in ladling public money out to the big banks, meanwhile publishing ar-





rantly misleading statements. So it turns out that my suspicions are right, but my figures all wrong – Dawes, for instance, got twice as much as I thought.

What really happened, I imagine, is that a delegation of raiders called on Hoover, and told him that if he did not come to the rescue, a lot of the big banks would close up, and the world would come to an end; and that they simply scared and bulldozed him into pushing Eugene Meyer's scheme – or rather, taking it over and fathering it. I can pretty well imagine what would have happened if they had tried that game on Andrew Jackson or Lincoln, or perhaps even Grover Cleveland:

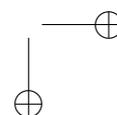
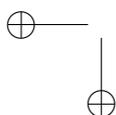
*Lincoln* (with a slight twinkle in his eye, after listening the bankers out to the bitter end), "Well, gentlemen, as I see it, all I can say is that it's just too bad."

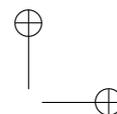
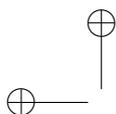
*Bankers*, "But, Mr. President, aren't you going to do something about it?"

*Lincoln*, "I haven't made up my mind yet. I'll be able to tell you better after you've gone bust."

A gang like that did wait on Lincoln once during the Civil War, to get him to build a fleet to protect New York harbour. After they got through telling him how many millions of dollars they represented, Lincoln said, "All I can say is, gentlemen, that if I were as rich as you are, and as badly scared as you are, I would build those ships myself."

Some of the people I talk with seem to think the country shows a creditable self-restraint in that Hoover and the banking ilk are not hanged. I am not sure it is creditable or even commendable.

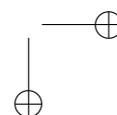
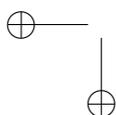


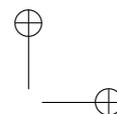
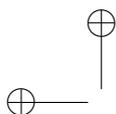


*23 December* – As I go about, I am impressed by our having apparently pretty well got over one thing, our feeling of immense superiority to foreigners. It will come back, no doubt, for that is the fruit of nationalist education, but I think it is quite fairly stewed out of the present generation, and that we are much healthier for it.

*24 December* – New York is unspeakably odious now. I had rather be here at any other time of year than in the Christmas holidays. I don't begrudge anyone any happiness, and if people are happy in what they are doing at this time, I am all for it, but to me it seems inhumanly laborious and dreadful. Nor was it better in the old days. Dickens's Christmas stories always sounded very hollow in my ears. Bret Harte caught this sound precisely in his parody called *The Haunted Man*. I have often wondered why our nationalist littérateurs who like to blow our horn, never have pointed out that America produced, in Harte, the greatest parodist that ever lived; for just that he was.

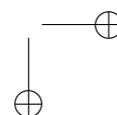
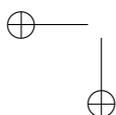
*26 December* – Technocracy again, in *Harper's* leading article for January, and the newspapers are featuring it. I have no interest in people who tell us how things ought to be done in public affairs, because I know how they *are* done. Ideas, as such, do not function in the *res publica*. This is something that political liberals, and especially reformers, never learn, and their ignorance of it makes them the most impractical of all people in politics as long as they avoid compromise, and when they go in for compromise they succumb to intellectual dishonesty. I have seen no end of such in my day. The

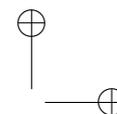
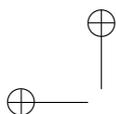




great enemy of ideas, as Renan says, is *le matérialisme vulgaire, la bassesse de l'homme intéressé*; or as someone else in the last century put it, I think it was Professor Huxley, plenty of people would be found to deny the law of gravitation if a financial interest were involved. Once in a while some man or party in politics – like Mr. Roosevelt in the present instance – sees himself in danger of colliding with an idea. He has some men around him who know something about ideas, and says to them, “Now, this is your kind of thing – how are we going to manage it so that we shall get what we want?” Perhaps he does not put it in so many words, but that is what it comes to. Along with this, curiously, there goes in the liberal mind a doctrinaire faith in American integrity, patriotism, idealism, and all the rest of it. Mr. Wilson was a notable victim of these aberrations.

*28 December* – Someone was saying that the density of certain stars is now known to be so great that physicists can account for it only by saying that they are made of collapsed atoms. Beside this material, our hardest and densest substances are relatively gaseous; we have nothing to compare with it. I am more struck with the metaphysical than the physical aspect of this discovery, if the thing be true, as probably it is. It shows how limited is the range of our actual experience of even the physical universe, and how foolish we are in thinking that its totality is anywhere near final. We know a little something about matter and force, but all our knowledge is probably somewhere around the middle of a long scale; and how long the scale is, and what goes on at the ends of it – or what actually exists at the ends of it – we have

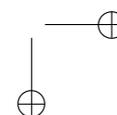
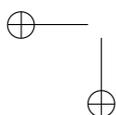


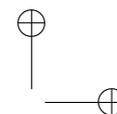
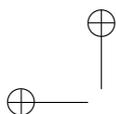


no idea. An enormous leeway must be allowed for this ignorance when we consider questions like the persistence of consciousness after death, for instance.

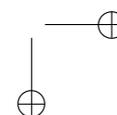
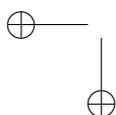
*29 December* – I have been reading a few bits out of Arnold Bennett's journal; they sound curiously like the jottings of a huckster. He seems to have been a kind, generous sort of man, with no instinct of the man of letters about him; regarding letters as pure merchandise. Also one would say he was a good bit of a bounder at heart, or even sometimes at hand, as Dickens was, and Balzac. I never could get far with his books, so I have no opinion about them.

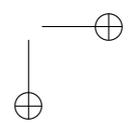
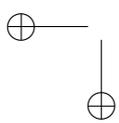
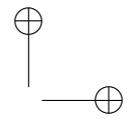
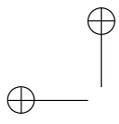
*30 December* – Someone in the club here has been talking about his youth, with the hankering air of one who wants it back. This is a common sentiment that I was never able to fall in with or even really to understand. I would be willing to go through life again, I think, but I would not care to have my youth protracted beyond its time. Mine was easy and happy, and I was as decent as most, but when I remember how ignorantly mean, self-centred, undisciplined, trivial and cruel I was, I don't want any more of it. There may be something very wrong with me, but I do not regard youth as in any way attractive or desirable. It is merely something to be got over. I should say that it has been enormously over-sentimentalized in this country. Perhaps the reason is that our whole civilization is so deplorably immature, and therefore in glorifying youth we are glorifying ourselves, which everyone more or less likes to do.

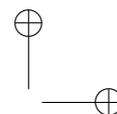
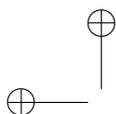




*31 December* – The last of 1932, and I am glad to see it go. I am not sure that we are changing for the better, but mere change, in this case, is good, even if it be for the worse. The chance for improvement in business is perhaps about even. We may be at the bottom and on our way across the valley; I think we are. We don't know how wide the valley is, however – that is the trouble. After 1873 there was very little doing before 1881. Then again we may discover that times like these are normal, and having adjusted ourselves to them we may find that they are not so bad. I doubt this, however. I think that in time, though not very soon, we shall have a return of “prosperity” with a repetition of all the idiocies and imbecilities of the last dozen years. Having learned nothing from similar experiences, why should we think we have learned anything from this one?



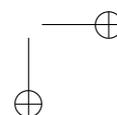
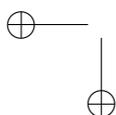


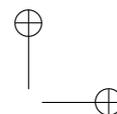
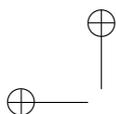


## 1933 January

*1 January* – The town was noisy as usual last night, no more so and no less. I was going back to the country tomorrow, but decided to stay over for a luncheon in honour of John Masefield.

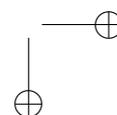
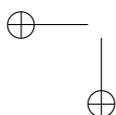
*2 January* – My confidence is a little shaken when I see the incredible ineptitude in the management of our public affairs. It now appears that the French have a case in their refusal to pay up on 15 December. The Chancellor of the British Exchequer has blown the gaff. Hoover and Stimson, *par nobile fratrum*, led the French and British on to believe that if they eased up on Germany at Lausanne, we would ease up on them, and they accordingly did so. Their understanding was that we had finally accepted the principle of connecting debts with indemnity. Then we came down on them for our December instalment, and the French refused to pay. I get this from the *Manchester Guardian*, which is far from being pro-French, but supports them in this instance. Our press has kept very quiet about the facts behind the French case, as one would expect it to do. *L'Illustration*

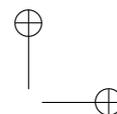
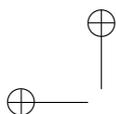




calls our demand infamous, under the circumstances. Of course Hoover and Stimson could not bind Congress any more than Wilson could the Senate, over the Versailles Treaty; but since that is so, what business had they to engage in anything that could be twisted into any appearance of a commitment? Above all, why be secretive about something that would profit most by frank publicity? Roosevelt was very wise to tell Hoover that the Debt Commission idea was his baby, and that he could jolly well tend it all by himself. Perhaps Roosevelt can make some capital out of the incident by telling the next Congress that they must make good on the implied obligation that the Republicans let them in for. This might be a good face-saver in view of the fact that nobody is going to pay any more, anyway. But whether Roosevelt can use it depends on the state of the country. If things pick up, he probably can't, but if they stay as they are, he might do himself a good turn in that way.

*3 January* – What a capital playground for a rich man America has been these last dozen years! I have often wondered why some of them do not employ experts in the art of living, as they do experts in “social science,” education, etc., – for their own benefit, I mean. Mr. Harkness, for instance, employs several advisers who pass on the worth of appeals for help from colleges, social-service organizations, hospitals, etc. I wonder if he ever thought of employing somebody to advise him on the technique of getting through twenty-four hours a day rationally and happily. As I think of it, though, probably that technique is not communicable. One can manage it oneself, but can not tell anybody else how

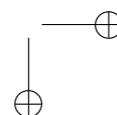
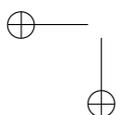


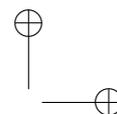
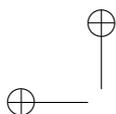


to manage it. There are more matters like that than we commonly imagine. I once asked the *patron* of the restaurant *Écrevisse* to give me his recipe for waterzoeï, and he said, “Certainly, with pleasure – but you can’t make it.” Nor could I; nor could I if he had stood by me all the time and told me exactly what to do. When Edwin F. Gay took over the *Evening Post* from Villard, he asked me, among others, for suggestions on how to run it, and I told him it was no use. I could get out a good paper for him, but could not tell him how, not even if he gave me desk-room in his office and kept me there all day.

*4 January* – There is unanimous testimony that Radio Centre is a colossal failure. Apparently Americans will never understand the principle of diminishing returns. That style of thing was thoroughly tried out at the Hippodrome, and failed; and if it failed there, it would manifestly fail anywhere. I think all the trouble with our pet concerns is that they are overbuilt – business, finance, government, all of them. Radio Centre is an impressive example. The object of going to a theatre is to be reached by a show; and everyone says that in a theatre of that size no show can possibly reach anybody.

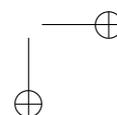
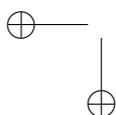
*5 January* – The most encouraging news from Russia is that the Government has put its foot down flat on the humbug about “revolutionary art,” and has started in to encourage a return to the classic principles of literature, music, painting, etc. I put the usual discount on this press report, with a little extra for having read it in the *Herald-Tribune*, but when I ran across Max Eastman at

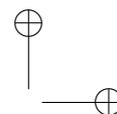
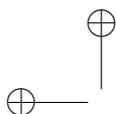




dinner at Alfred Knopf's the other night, I asked him whether it was true or not, and he said it was. If so, the Russians may be learning more from our failure than we give them credit for. Today's paper, too, says that they are about to build a library at Moscow that will hold eight million books. In itself, of course, this is nothing much; everything depends on what kind of books they are and what people do with them. There are plenty of fine libraries in this country, the Lord knows; also this rainy morning there is plenty of water falling on ducks' backs, no doubt.

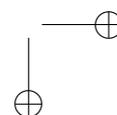
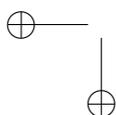
*6 January* – Yesterday as I took the three o'clock train for the South County, I saw the headline announcing Coolidge's sudden death. He was a parochial mind, a trivial man, but he had certain parochial virtues that made him conspicuous by contrast with the spirit of his time. If they had been more generally practiced, we would be better off. His Administration was unfortunate, but he himself "had very little influence with it," as Lincoln said, and could hardly have done much better. His great misfeasance was in encouraging the mania of speculation, but he probably saw nothing in it that was against his principles as a good New Englander, and quite possibly believed that the "new economics" had come to stay. His writing tuppenny stuff for newspapers and cheap magazines was lamentable, but there was money in it, and it was technically an honest pursuit; so again as a good New Englander he would see no reason why not. One can say little for him or against him – an inconsiderable figure, in some ways interesting and in some ways rather likeable.

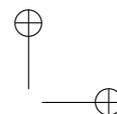
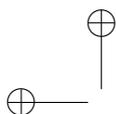




7 January – I see that Senator Borah has let the cat out of the bag in regard to the French case for the default of 15 December, and Walter Lippmann follows with a magisterial inquest on the matter. Pretty late, I should say; why not have come out with it sooner, and set the thing straight at once? The papers still exploit the notion that the French will pay up their arrears on an understanding with the new Administration. Maybe they will, but I doubt it, for I can see no clearer reason that I ever saw why they should; and I never saw any.

8 January – Today's *Times* says that Portugal is doing well under its "dictatorship." We need to escape from the tyranny of words and from a hard-and-fast philosophy of society. Sometimes the whole mass of the people must be pyramided towards some social end, like an old-fashioned football-wedge, with some fellow in the van who has a bullet-head and a deal of solid horse-flesh on his bones – well, there you have your dictator. At other times, things go another way. A good political system ought to be flexible enough to accommodate both, as the English system is. I imagine that last year the king sent for MacDonald and Baldwin, and said, "See here, now, we've had enough factional business. This thing is getting dangerous, and we must have a national Government. MacDonald must head it, and the rest of you boys will have to fall in until we see our way out of the woods. So be off now, and let's have some action." Of course I do not know that this took place, but I would bet anything it did. Under the English system you can have an *ad hoc* dictatorship, *ad hoc* anything, with no waste of time and no disturbance – you don't need to

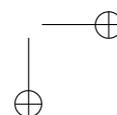
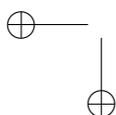


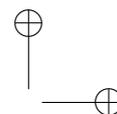
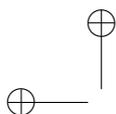


raise the devil with a gang of vicious lazzaroni, marching them on London, and dosing malcontents with castor oil. You can have an *ad hoc* revolution as thorough-going as the French, any time you want it. I was in London when the House of Lords was gently and pleasantly put on the shelf, and it did not cause a ripple. You can't give a name to such a system; it is not autocratic, republican, Fascist, Communist, but it can be any one of them you like, and all of them in turn, and still keep going in an orderly way. The English have been at it a long time, have made many mistakes, and have managed to learn a great deal in a rule-of-thumb fashion. That they have enormous political abuses is another matter; no system can be proof against these, as Burke and William Penn have testified. But their system is good; as compared with ours, it is practically perfect. Think of the mischief of these four months of virtual interregnum before the new Administration comes in! In England, a change of Governments is a matter of a day or two.

*9 January* – Three beautiful deer capering about the apple-orchard, not a hundred feet from the house where I am stopping; and this in the most populous State in the Union, and at half past four in the afternoon, full daylight.

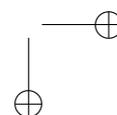
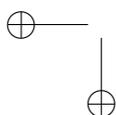
*10 January* – A delightful day, after yesterday's hard rain. I saw a fat robin on the lawn this morning, looking as though he quite knew what he was about. I also heard a chickadee. Prophecies of a hard winter have certainly failed so far.

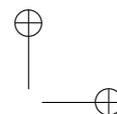
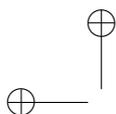




*11 January* – A letter from Fred Howe, wondering why the small countries are never in trouble, or give trouble, like the big ones. He says he can hold up his head in Denmark with so much more self-respect than here or in France, for instance. Queer, that so experienced a man as Fred should see it that way. It is not size but wealth that counts. Belgium is a very small country, but also very rich, and therefore always in trouble. Holland is never in trouble; it has nothing worth stealing. Likewise Switzerland – you can't interest France in hotel-keeping. Sweden, next to Russia, is the largest country in Europe, but its natural resources would not pay for the cost of cabbaging them; neither would Portugal's, except for Spain, perhaps. Let a small country strike oil, for instance, in paying quantities, and you will see plenty of trouble. I read with real distress the other day that oil had been found in Austria. I hope it is not true, for that would be the culminating misfortune of that unhappy country.

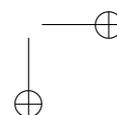
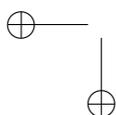
*12 January* – One wonders what the "historian of the future" is going to put down as the world's net gain from the rise of the proletariat. I would guess only a wider diffusion of material well-being, and that is a great deal. The American experiment is a dead failure, so far. It has paid too high a price for such diffusion of well-being as it has made, which at best has been nothing great. The Russian experiment may have learned from us that man is not purely a technological animal, but is also a spiritual and social being. I hope so. But there is little use in looking ahead. We can count up the net on the rise of other elements – the feudal lords, the working

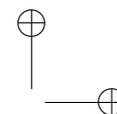
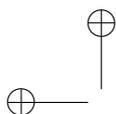




bourgeois, the exploiting bourgeois, etc., – and thus get a provisional direction on the future, but it is most uncertain. For my part, I don't much mind a proletarian control of politics, but the proletarian control of culture makes a very objectionable kind of civilization. In this country, literature and the arts are all put under that control for the sake of profit – look at the titles of books advertised in today's newspaper, or any day's! – and the general effect is loathsome and depressing. The older countries of Europe have managed to avoid anything like so complete a cultural surrender. This has a great deal to do with making life there pleasanter than here, and I can not see that the proletariat has suffered by it.

*13 January* – A chemist tells me an interesting thing about certain toilet preparations. He says he had several offers from big drug houses to produce them commercially, but always on condition that he would cheapen the cost. On his shaving-cream, for instance, instead of a cocoa-butter base at sixty cents a pound, the idea was to use an ordinary animal fat at two or three cents; and on his disinfectant, to use domestic instead of imported material, in order to compete with Listerine, etc. He refused. They told him he was a fool, for the purchaser would not know the difference. He said he was aware of that, that he had always been a fool, and expected always to be one, and that they might go to the devil. The “American business man's” idea is that a product is made to be sold, like Hodge's razor, in the old poem, I think by Canning. That it should be made for use is the last thing in his mind. The worst of this idea is its



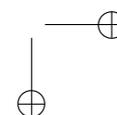
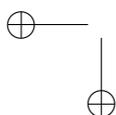


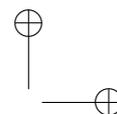
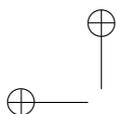
effect on himself; it makes him a creature such as Kent describes Oswald, in *King Lear*.

*14 January* – I have another sample of the American business man's integrity. The editor of a magazine to which I have often contributed asked me for an article, on a clear understanding from me of what it should be. I wrote it accordingly, and he refused to accept it, sending it back with as silly a letter as ever read. I replied merely that I would have nothing more to do with him, ever, in any way. Now, the odd part of all this is that a few days before, he and his assistant had been urging me to write them something on the general decline of honesty in America, and I had said I was not interested; and the article we agreed on was an alternative. Yet I presume those people had really no notion that they were acting dishonestly; they were doing something that they were pretty sure they "could get away with" – as they did – and that is the canon of integrity in American affairs. Our bankers, investment houses, industrialists, etc., hold themselves answerable to this canon alone, and so on down to the panhandler, racketeer, and the student who cribs his way through an examination. Why should one write about this, since everyone knows it and accepts it?

*15 January* – A literary notion that Frank Warrin and I were discussing today. Kipling quotes the *Saga of King Olaf* thus:

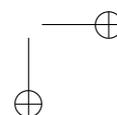
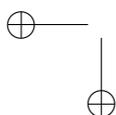
Answered, "That is Norway, breaking  
'Neath thy hand, O king."

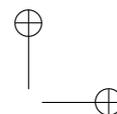
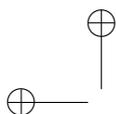




Did he know he was improving on Longfellow, or did he do it unconsciously? I think the latter. The change from “in thy hand” to “neath thy hand” is a great improvement in euphony. I remember quoting from memory a few lines from *Potash and Perlmutter* in a letter to Cassandre two or three years ago, when the same thing happened, and I was much surprised when Cassandre wrote me in her dry way that she had looked up the lines and thought my emendations had improved them considerably. Perhaps one could work this out into a scientific approach to literature, as antecedent to an æsthetic approach; the idea being that when you have something that you can’t misquote without your ear at once setting you straight, you have a classic – e.g., Shakespeare’s passage about the cloud-capped towers, or the address of Zeus to the horses of Achilles. The idea does bear on the nature of language, as against the wheelbarrow-theory that the object of language is only to get oneself understood; and here we have the entry into æsthetics. A pianist can “interpret” a composition of Brahms in any one of several ways without damage, but there are only two ways to play a suite of Bach, one being the right way and the other the wrong way.

*17 January* – This miserable rattling cough continues. I am reconciling myself to the idea that it will stay with me until Spring – getting myself into the frame of mind that the Scots call *fey*; living, moving and having one’s being in the shadow of death, until death itself intervenes. About the first of March I shall go to the Islands of Hyères, and live as one should. When Thomas Jefferson saw that region, he wrote in his journal that

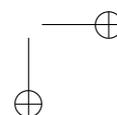
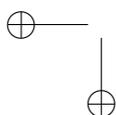


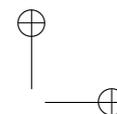
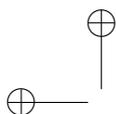


if a person wished “to retire from his acquaintance” and live happily alone, there was no better place to settle. I always liked that expression, and thought I saw a touch of wistfulness in it, knowing the grand old man’s love of solitude.

*20 January* – Reading Norman Douglas’s *Siren Land* revived my regret for the disappearance of the amateur scholar, or the amateur spirit in scholarship. The book has a fine full background, such as not too many modern writers could give it. I was struck by this observation on the municipal system in Italy: “No public spirit can exist where the good intentions of a few are absorbed by the vices to which the institution lends itself.” Nothing could be better; it tells the whole story of public spirit in the United States. I have been unjust to Douglas. Some five or six years ago, Cassandre set me to reading his *South Wind*, and I found it so disagreeable that I had nothing to do with him afterwards, until Frank Warrin insisted on my trying *Siren Land*. I made my first nibble at the essay on Tiberius, and then swallowed the book whole.

*21 January* – Wars have been going on steadily ever since the War to End All Wars, and now an uncommonly well-informed expert on Far Eastern affairs, Mr. Nathaniel Peffer, warns us that war between Japan and the United States is imminent. Will that be advertised as the War to End the Wars that Followed the War to End All Wars? Too cumbrous a title, I think; the publicity-jackals will have to shave it down. But as to war in the East, has it not been clear for fifteen years that China is the next field for commercial exploitation, and what else but war





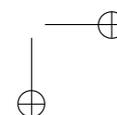
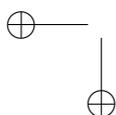
can that mean? I said that plainly in the *Freeman* ten years ago.

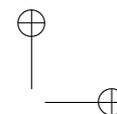
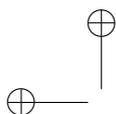
*24 January* – A quiet little hermit lives here in the South County. He built a small house for himself over Charles Town way, and there he lives contentedly alone, seldom seeing anyone, raising most of his food, and caring little for anything but the birds, trees and flowers. He is well-educated, kindly, gentle-spirited, and everyone likes him and respects him, though he is so much a recluse that one hardly ever sees him. I have known him twenty years, and have not laid eyes on him half a dozen times in all that period; yet when I met him the other day he greeted me like an old friend, said he had kept up with me through my writings – and passed on. He is quite the example, in my mind, of the man who has learned to take life in the United States as he finds it. As Matthew Arnold wrote of Wordsworth –

The cloud of human destiny,  
Others will front it fearlessly,  
But who, like him, will *put it by*?

He has perhaps a few hundred dollars to call his own in the course of a year, enough for books and for such other things as a man needs who needs almost nothing. I doubt if he ever sees a newspaper. The “burning questions” of the day do not exist for him. His isolation keeps him unruffled and sound; a gentleman, in short, as he truly is.

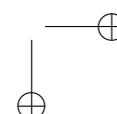
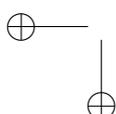
*25 January* – All that makes me suspect there may be something in Technocracy is that the *New York Times*

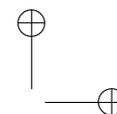
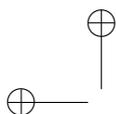




and *Herald-Tribune* ridicule it. If they ignored it altogether, I would be practically sure it was a pretty sound thing. I see that the *Nation* calls for an “impartial commission” to investigate it, and you would never catch Villard advocating the investigation of anything likely to work. So far, the best thing I have seen about Technocracy is its revival of McLeod’s observation that banking and brokerage are nothing but merchandizing of debt, and that the trade in debts is the biggest business there is. All that the Technocrat brethren say on this head is sound and very useful; McLeod’s simple and accurate definition ought to dispel some of the glamour that has hung around mere paper-business and genteel pawnbrokerage these many years, and bring people back to the notion that the only real wealth in the world is commodities, and that all debts can be paid only in commodities or services.

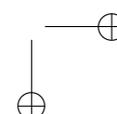
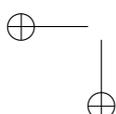
*26 January* – A woman out in Little Rock, Arkansas, writes me that she is to review my University of Virginia lectures for her woman’s club, and wants some autobiographical data. She writes very civilly, with not the faintest idea that anyone could regard curiosity about such matters as objectionable and impertinent. I suppose she will think I am a very strange person because I refused to give her this information. It has often struck me that the unlimited display of this sort of interest is perhaps the clearest proof of our incorrigible infantilism. I know that foreigners who come here to lecture are sometimes surprised at the exhibitionist performances that they are expected to go through. Christiane told me some of the experiences that General Lyautey’s son

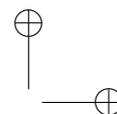
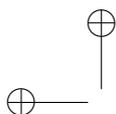




had at Williamstown and elsewhere last summer, and how he felt about them. He is a serious person and took his engagements seriously, and was indignant at finding himself the object of mere personal curiosity – so indignant that after a little of it, he threw up his visit and went home. What annoyed him especially was the showmanship at Williamstown – the subordination of ideas and the discussion of ideas to the requirements of putting on a striking show. For instance, he hoped to debate Franco-German relations with a serious and capable German scholar who was there, but that would not do; they put him up against a junker who could be trusted to start a livelier show – black must be black, and white must be white, the bad German against the good Frenchman. For my part, I can not see why we do not carry this national tendency further in our politics. We carry it some way, but not far enough to make anything but a dull show. Roxy as President, with Earl Carroll or one of the Minsky boys as Secretary of State, would liven things up properly.

*27 January* – I am glad I came to Scott's novels late in life, when I could properly appreciate their immense objectivity. I can understand how they caught the unflinching eye of Goethe, who had no sympathy with the French "literature of despair," and was repelled by "the self-consciousness of our modern hypochondrists, humorists and self-tormentors." I remember Joubert's saying of this same school, that "with the fever of the senses, the delirium of the passions, the weakness of the spirit; with the storms of the passing time, and with the great scourges of human life – hunger, thirst, dishonour, disease and

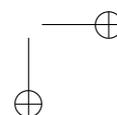
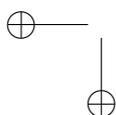


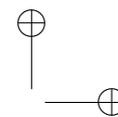
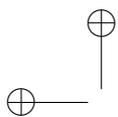


death – authors may as long as they will go on making novels which harrow our hearts; but the soul says all the while, ‘You hurt me.’” He gives precisely the right criticism of such novels also, when he says that “they have no place in literature.” If all else fails and is worn away by the current of fashion, Scott’s objectivity will give him a place in literature forever.

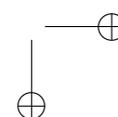
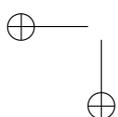
*28 January* – Witter Bynner turned up at the Anonyme, on his first visit to New York in some years. He says he enjoys his friends now much more than at any time since the war; from being so long spoiled and pretentious, they have become simpler and happier. I myself find the state of mind here now much more agreeable than formerly. I was in this country hardly at all between 1924–1930, but what I saw of it was unconscionably repulsive, utterly odious. I see many more cheerful faces now than then, for then I saw none, only hard, haggard, unsmiling ones. It is a pleasant change. Particularly in the downtown section, however, around Wall Street, I notice that the faces that have remained hard and haggard now show a desperate expression, quite dehumanized, and I am told that the lives of many down there have become really desperate – those who formerly drank more or less, now drink desperately; those who chased women now and then, chase them all the time; and so on. This is natural, for misfortune is always a challenge in either direction, to a better course of life or a worse one.

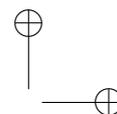
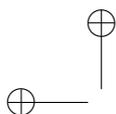
*31 January* – The Kaiser is said to be publishing his correspondence, showing England’s main responsibility for the war. What I never could see was how the Ger-





man Foreign Office had the wool pulled over its eyes in the matter of England's probable neutrality. England's attitude was determined by the very factors that Prince Lichnowsky counted on to keep her neutral – the movements for Irish, Scotch and Welsh home rule, the land-values campaign and the formidable consolidation of the three great labour-unions. All these came to a head in the early summer of 1914, and their culmination made it certain that England would enter the war. How Prince Lichnowsky could have thought otherwise is inconceivable. Apparently no one has looked up the progress of those three movements in the period August, 1911, to July, 1914, and no one is entitled to an opinion on this question until he has done so. I was in England during this period, and followed the matter from the inside, and I know whereof I speak.



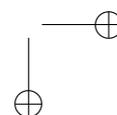
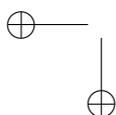


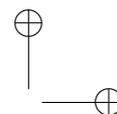
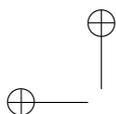
## 1933 February

*1 February* – It is interesting to recall that if our country had grown naturally and normally, in response to the actual demands of our population instead of the demands of speculators, we would not yet have spread nearly to the Mississippi River. As we are, I doubt that we have a population of more than twenty to the square mile. This is a guess – we may have more, but not many more. What an absurd way to set up a national organization!

*2 February* – Germany is again giving Americans the surprise of their lives; another item in the extremely expensive education in foreign affairs that Americans have been getting since 1914. It must be a hard blow for our liberal friends who have been setting so much store by Germany's republicanism; but they should be used to hard blows from the hand of fate by this time.

*3 February* – I never saw such full tides at Narragansett, or the ponds so full of water at this time of year. A strange season! The air is clear and warm, the Japanese quince is budded, and a whole bed of violets is in flower,

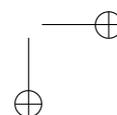
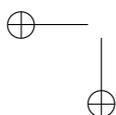


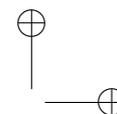
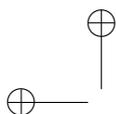


very fragrant. Ploughing has gone on here and there all winter, there not having been a single day, I think, when it was not practicable.

*4 February* – Neville Chamberlain gives it out crabbedly that England is willing to talk about the debts, but has no bargains to offer; this has set Washington to waving its ears and braying. Why does it not occur to someone on our side of the water to say plainly that all this palaver about the debts is academic, because there is no way for us to collect them? France has told us very coolly that we may whistle for our money – well, just what can we do about it? Most Americans seem to think of those debts and debtors as they would of a transaction in lumber between a firm in Maine and one in New York, and it is not a parallel case, exactly. There is no process of levy-and-distress that we can apply which would not cost us more than the debts are worth.

Christiane is mystified by the report she read somewhere of some high-life stag banquet, where on the impulse of the moment the guests went out and rounded up a crew of the unemployed to eat the dinner, instead of eating it themselves. Well, no French person could possibly understand anything about such a performance, or see how a good spirit could be behind it on both sides; while we understand it easily. What particularly bothered Christiane was the attitude of the unemployed, for in France they would have mobbed the high-life at the mere suggestion. That is true. I like our way better. In purely personal relations – perhaps also collectively, though I am not sure – I think there is a better ground of understanding between our high-life and our proletariat,



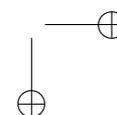
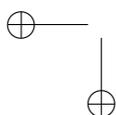


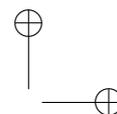
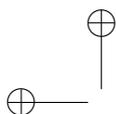
at least in some sections of it, than there is in most countries.

*5 February* – A light snowfall in New York has given work to some thousands of idle persons, clearing it away. It is interesting to remark that if it were possible to monopolize a snowfall profitably, like other natural resources, it would be done, and those who wished to work on it would have to pay rent for the privilege. In fact, when snow melts, it is monopolized in many places by private water-companies.

*6 February* – It is a sincere aggravation to me that the really good restaurants in New York, such as a civilized person enjoys patronizing, are mostly down in the financial district. One hates to see, at least I do, such good food served out in such pleasant surroundings to such a parcel of thieves and sharpers, who should be boarding in Sing Sing if they had their just due. Libby's restaurant on Fulton Street is a grand place, and so are the two that have their back entrances on Marketfield Street, just off the court that gives one a vague reminder of London, the only one I know of in New York that does.

*7 February* – One of the most ludicrous things that has happened lately is the Senate's resentment of Barry's *obiter dictum* that some of its members are corrupt, when it is perfectly open and notorious that vote-buying with public money is the very best thing they do. While Barry's case is up before the Senate, the House votes



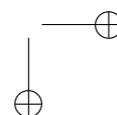
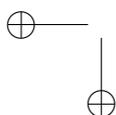


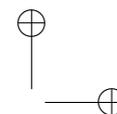
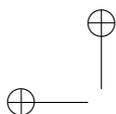
nearly a billion dollars for “veteran’s relief,” which has been shown on all sides to be a colossal swindle.

*8 February* – The Senate has summoned 52 men for “consultation” on the economic state of the country – and what men! The same old crew, who never had an idea in their lives, or the ability to recognize one if they saw it. Lamont, Baruch, Traylor, Garvan, Atterbury, Gifford, Loree, Vanderlip – and as God is my judge, John F. Hylan! I predict that these “consultations” will dribble out into nothingness and disappear from the news in very short order. Suppose the Senate summoned someone who was intelligent, and who was willing to say just what was in his mind, what would happen?

*9 February* – When Nervous Nellie Kellogg was Secretary of State, we always heard of the Nicaraguan, Sandino, as a “bandit.” Now our press has suddenly changed its tune perforce, because as soon as our marines are out of Nicaragua, Sandino comes forward to sign up with the home team. His “banditry” consisted in his objection to having his country overrun by the janizaries of our economic imperialism. I can imagine that Arminius and Vercingetorix felt much the same way, and if we could get hold of a copy of the Rome *Morning Fasces*, we would probably find it misnaming them as despicably as the New York press misnamed Sandino.

*10 February* – Webster’s cartoons interest me. I have just now been looking at some women in a restaurant who have profiles most characteristically like his standard

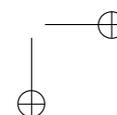
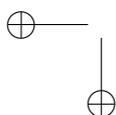


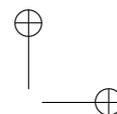
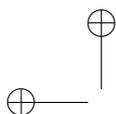


subjects. One sees his men, too, everywhere downtown. There is matter for pretty serious thought in this.

*11 February* – The egregious intellectual dishonesty of the English and Americans comes out strongly in their shirking of the names of things and actions. We got used to “mandates” instead of the gross word “possessions,” and “reparations” instead of “indemnity” in the war. Now we accept the dole by calling it “unemployment relief.” Shortly we shall have to find some acceptable synonym for inflation, I dare say.

*12 February* – My expectation is that we shall be at war with Japan within a reasonable time, and my belief is that the British Foreign Office is doing its best to get us in earlier. I predicted (in print) that the last war would leave the United States in the same position towards the one market potentially exploitable on a large scale – China – that Germany was towards Morocco in 1911. Germany did not want any territory in Morocco, any more than we want any in China. She wanted to sell goods, as we do, and disliked having the “open door” slammed shut by France, as we would dislike having it slammed shut by Japan. Japan’s energetic motions must make England and France a little anxious about the value of their holdings in China, for before long Japan will have consolidated a position, as the French did in Morocco, which will enable her to exploit China properly. Well, then, if I were an Englishman and a crook, or a Frenchman and a crook, I should fish diligently in the troubled waters of the “open door policy” that the United States wants maintained. As an American, if I were a

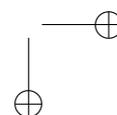
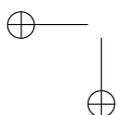


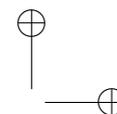
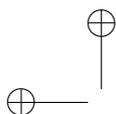


crook, I should say to myself, “War with Japan would reduce unemployment, make business brisk – until the bills begin to come in, which we won’t worry about just yet – and it would also give the people something stirring to think about, and stiffen the government’s hand to a point where we might revive the good old profitable autocracies of 1860 and 1917, when anything was all right if you could get away with it.” If such thoughts as these are not at this moment preoccupying some of “our best minds,” I am no longer as good a guesser as I used to be.

*14 February* – Talk about “balancing the budget” has become a kind of ritual. We never had a budget until lately, and it has never yet balanced – how have we managed to rub along all these years? One gets precious sick of these hollow litanies. What “balancing the budget” really means for the incoming Administration is that there may not be so much available money to be wasted and stolen as formerly, and that it must curb its voracity to hold its job; but what it can safely waste and steal, it will. That is the whole story.

*16 February* – Pleasant luncheon at the University Club with Dr. Bell; he told me what cured him of Socialism. An old Oxonian listened to his profession of faith in “the average man,” and then quietly said that it was all very fine, but in his experience the average man was an ass; an ass when he thinks, when he talks, when he reads, when he votes. How, then, to expect him to act less like an ass collectively than he does individually? I marvel that I was so long about seeing this, yet I took my faith

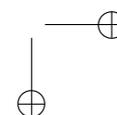
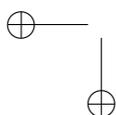


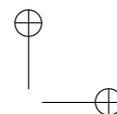
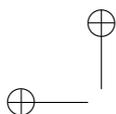


in the average man straight from Mr. Jefferson for years. But Mr. Jefferson was curiously inconsistent. When he spoke from instinct or experience, he would say things like, "What a Bedlamite is man!" When he spoke from theory, he over-rated the average man; his faith in him seems to have been a pure outshoot of political theory. Bell remarked that great leaders never took stock in the average man, and I can not think of one who did – Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Jesus, no, I do not recall one. This is significant. Notoriously, great political leaders never took stock in him. The "great democratic leaders," e.g., Lincoln, certainly were as handy as anyone at putting the average man in his place. Someone should make an essay on this subject.

*17 February* – I noticed the other day that the Democratic national organization has a deficit of \$750,000. I should think that before long it would occur to someone to raise the question why national party organizations should be privately supported, and on such a scale. What body of men has conceivably \$750,000 worth of interest in electing an Administration, and why? What kind of interest is it? I am told it took twenty million dollars to elect Hoover, though I do not believe it; still, it must have meant a very large outlay. Now, what does that signify? What kind of politics can be expected where the party system is privately financed?

*18 February* – The Senate has voted for a repeal of the Prohibition Amendment, and the House will probably concur – leaving the sources of graft and patronage carefully undisturbed, of course. But a mere repeal of

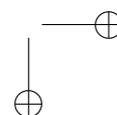
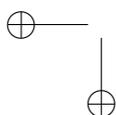


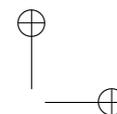
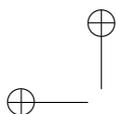


Prohibition can not, I think, do much towards reviving a moral sense that has been degraded by the convergent impact of so many influences for so many years. Repeal is right, and it will do good, but too much should not be expected from it.

*19 February* – One of Christiane’s French friends who has been lecturing around the country, says he finds that as a people we have an undue sense of inferiority; that we are always dwelling on our shortcomings and putting our worst foot forward, instead of making the most of the fine things we have and especially of the fine folks we produce. This strikes me as a very superficial observation. We have the finest things to be found anywhere, and the finest people in the world, plenty of them. My own American acquaintance, for instance, is simply unmatchable in any other land I know of; I should like to name a couple of dozen among them to stand as marks for other civilizations to shoot at, in point of character, culture, education, manners, everything that distinguishes the human being *par excellence*. But the point is that with us such persons are wholly ineffectual; they have no influence; our society does not at all take its tone from them, directly or indirectly; and in no other country is this the case, as far as I know. Elsewhere they may be to some extent submerged, but not wholly, as with us. All our institutions prove this by their comparative quality; our literature, drama, pulpit, politics, what you will.

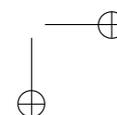
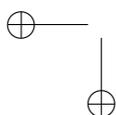
*21 February* – The press represents Mr. Roosevelt and his family, especially his wife, as trying to popularize themselves by being as undignified as they-can. I hope

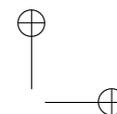
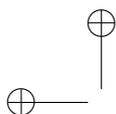




this is not true. It is long since there has been any natural dignity in the White House. Arthur had it, and Taft, and they were the only ones, I think, since Buchanan. I often wonder whether people are greatly taken in by a conscious play to the galleries – whether they do not instinctively see with Heine that “a man thinks to show himself my equal by being *grob*; he does not show himself my equal, he shows himself *grob*.”

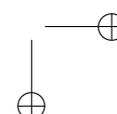
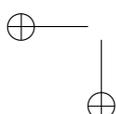
*22 February* – Walter Lippmann said very naively the other day that “at this distance it is almost impossible to obtain a clear understanding of the events which have led to the elevation of Hitler.” But distance has nothing to do with it, by comparison with the fact that the only news and “interpretations” of Germany that have come to us for ten years have been supplied from and by Socialists, pacifists, Jews. I thought of writing a letter to this effect to the *Herald-Tribune*, but sheer distaste stood in the way, and I did not do it. Rollin Kirby told me that Lippmann has a highly judicial mind, and at once I had the perverse thought of the English parson who had to preach a funeral sermon over a very dissolute sprig of the nobility. In the course of it he said, “He had great virtues; in fact, they degenerated into vices. He was very generous; but then, I hear that his generosity has ruined a great many people: and besides, his condescension was such that he kept extremely bad company.” That is my notion of a highly judicial mind. I did not quote this to Rollin, for he worked with Lippmann a long time and is a very loyal friend to him; but it was hard work to refrain.

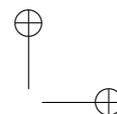
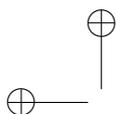




*23 February* – How much clear strong good sense our early independent political thinkers sometimes showed. In the preface to the code of government that he gave the colony of Pennsylvania, William Penn supplies a complete criticism of eighteenth-century political theory. Why treat monarchy, constitutionalism, republicanism, as if they were absolute? Penn says, “When all is said, there is hardly one frame of government so ill designed by its first founders that in good hands would not do well enough; and story tells us, the best, in ill ones, can do nothing that is great or good. . . Governments, like clocks, go from the motion men give them; and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them they are ruined too. Wherefore governments rather depend upon men than men upon governments. Let men be good, and the government can not be bad; if it be ill, they will cure it. But if men be bad, let the government be never so good, they will endeavour to warp and spoil it to their turn.” That tells the whole story; it is a perfect philosophy of government, and worth a dozen shelves of special treatises which are not based on it.

*24 February* – Reading Penn the other day turned me back on Thomas Paine, and the interesting distinction that he draws between Society and Government – the same as drawn later by Ludwig Gumplowicz and Franz Oppenheimer. What a complete tract for the times is in the first words of *Common Sense*! “Society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one; for when we suffer, or are exposed to, the same miseries *by* a government which we might expect in a country *without*

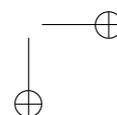
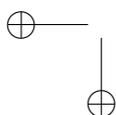


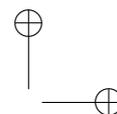
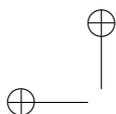


a government, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer." Also, quite in the vein of Penn, he says that "security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows that whatever form thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us, with the least expense and the greatest benefit, is preferable to all others."

*25 February* – Sailing today in dismal weather on the Italian liner *Conte di Savoia*, for Cannes. We left at noon, after an hour's delay over tinkering the engines. I suppose that the engine-crew, being Italians, did not try them out until half an hour or so before our leaving-time. One's spirits rise at once, despite the weather. I remember Cassandre's saying in her delightful dry way that "the sky-line of New York is the finest sight in America, when you see it from the deck of an out-bound ship." Few passengers; mainly Italians returning. Accommodations very fine and impressive.

*26 February* – Thinking over the testimony of Mitchell, president of the National City Bank, and wondering whether our people have wholly lost the faculty of indignation and the power of expressing it in any competent way. I suppose the worst that will happen is the starting of indiscriminate runs on all sorts of banks, sound and unsound. It is evident that everything Hoover and his fellow-condottieri had in mind was to keep an immense structure of debt intact until after the election. To do this they dished out public money with both hands through the R.F.C. to subsidize banking practices that are not only flagitious but criminal; for the subsidiary corpora-

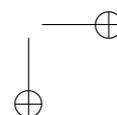
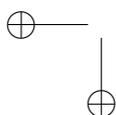


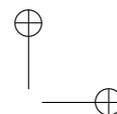
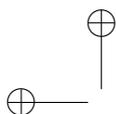


tions created by the banks for the purpose of gambling were created in evasion of law. Now the structure of debt is crumbling, and I think it will go to pieces very rapidly.

*27 February* – I can't get it out of my head that this ship is an anachronism, as much so as Radio Centre. It belongs to another time – all this sumptuousness, and a handful of people acting stiff and uncomfortable amidst it. It must be a great money-loser. Query: Will ships of this type ever “come back”? I rather doubt it, and I doubt if the Cunard people are showing good sense in finishing their super-liner. I am sorry not to be travelling by the Holland-America line, as I have for so many years. The Dutch still stick to their old policy, and run their ships as they always did. That is the line for really civilized people to take, and whenever I have travelled by it out of season, I have never failed to find a highly civilized ship's company aboard. In season, of course, it is overrun by all kinds, like the others.

*28 February* – The ship's news says Roosevelt has appointed Frances Perkins to be Secretary of Labour. *Quelle dégringolade!* as old Clémenceau – grand old highwayman! – said to Paderewski. Frances is a dear and good friend, and I must write her, though all I can say is that for those who like that sort of thing, it is probably about the sort of thing they like. But she knows me too well and is too sensible to take offence.



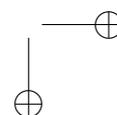
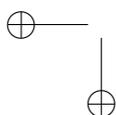


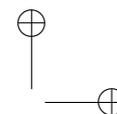
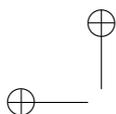
## 1933 March

*1 March* – Some things I have been musing on: The ship's news says that out in Omaha, as the result of a lawyer's wager, 300 voters signed a petition to nominate Zangara, who shot at Roosevelt, for mayor! Yet there are people who believe in Socialism, and in the power of the masses for intelligent self-direction.

Motion-pictures on board. I think the producers have put a throttling limitation on themselves by developing the talkie. How can enough stories that are even passably good be raked up to satisfy the market?

The ultra-modern ship seems like the modern gal. You can allow her everything for design, structure and decoration, but mighty little for charm. Could one ever come really to love this ship, as one did the *Nieuw Amsterdam*, for instance? I doubt it. The *Nieuw Amsterdam* was a real ship, and had character and distinction; this one has neither. Travel on her has none of the specific charm of a sea voyage, and gives none of the specific exhilaration and benefit. I am reminded of the old salt who went over a big modern liner with Dick Mansfield. He stood it in silence until they came to an indoor swimming-pool and



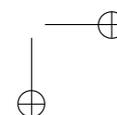
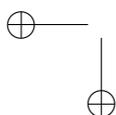


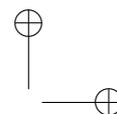
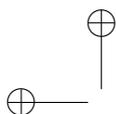
gymnasium. That was too much for him, and he said, “My God, chaplain, this ain’t a ship!”

The head of the English department on board must have been taken out of a chair at one of our universities, for the kind of English he produces in the bulletins is pretty weird. I have noticed that this sort of thing is better done in America than in Europe. When we have to put something out in a foreign language, we get somebody to sandpaper the idiom for us, and the result is usually good; not so the foreigner’s dealings with our noble and unlearnable tongue. E.g., the notice here reads that the ship’s time “will be set forth 53 minutes” tonight. In a curious way that is plausible and interesting, and really correct, I suppose, but not quite idiomatic.

Japan, I notice, has walked out on the League of Nations – an excellent thing. It helps to bring out the fact that the League is a monstrous humbug, in reality only a device for maintaining the *status quo*. It never had any other function or purpose than hoodwinking. It must be said for the Japanese that they are doing only what all hands have done before them, and while that is outrageously bad, it does not lie in the mouth of the Great Powers to say so, especially in England’s mouth or ours, merely because we happen at the moment to be fed up with all the loot that we can digest comfortably.

Italian buncombe is curiously inoffensive; it is so transparent and delivered with so plausible an air of conviction. This ship is advertised as “the ship that can not roll” because she has a gyro-stabilizer, the only ship in the world that has one, so they say. The fact is, she rolls heavier than any ship I was ever on, and in a moderate sea at that. I wonder what she could do without the

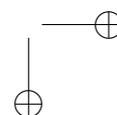
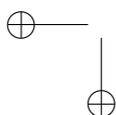


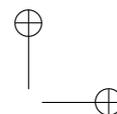
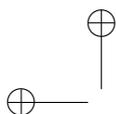


stabilizer. But one is neither irritated nor disgusted with this pretence; the impudence of it seems so purely a child-like “make-believe.” I think the Italians themselves really believe the ship does not roll. In Turin, years ago, I went to a theatre one hot evening, on the strength of reading that the hall would be cooled by a dozen *ventilatori ultrapotente*. These turned out to be six-inch electric fans, four blades each, and half of them would not go – I counted. The whole outfit was as ineffectual as it would be in Tophet, yet somehow I did not feel any resentment.

*3 March* – Apparently no one connected with this steamship line knows whether we land at Cannes or Villafranca tomorrow. In the New York office some said the one, some the other; here on board also the rival schools of thought are about evenly represented. The schedule says Cannes, and my ticket reads there; but neither circumstance means anything in particular to an Italian if he takes a notion otherwise. It would be a convenience to me to land at Cannes, so I am humbly hoping that the captain has had nothing especially interesting crop up to see or do at Villafranca – no old friends coming down to pass the time of day with him, or something of the sort.

*4 March* – Cannes it is, and a landing by tender in a driving rain, almost solid water. The French customs, a Bedlam of soaked and impatient passengers. By biding my time, I am passed with luggage unexamined, by a distracted official. Cannes has the best climate I have found on the French Riviera, but a rain makes the place

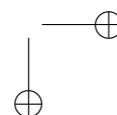
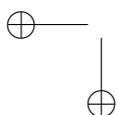


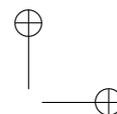
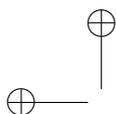


ghastly forlorn. It has rained for a week, they say, so it should be near the end of its string.

*5 March* – Glorious weather. The smell of soft coal is like that in Munich; I never got quite that characteristic odour elsewhere. Mimosas are out. Hardly any English here – what has become of them? Probably the shrunken pound has something to do with it. No Americans. Verily, it is a great time to be on the Riviera. Cannes seems well populated, but they are all French.

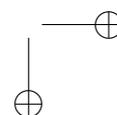
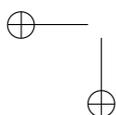
*6 March* – Lunch with Whitlock, mostly over literature, but a few words about public affairs. Comment on the frightful mess Hoover and his Gadarene herd have left behind them, like a family of scurvy tenants, for somebody else to clean up. Whitlock has some little hope of Roosevelt. I say he will go only so far, and in such directions, as will further his stay in office, which will of course improve things somewhat; he is expected to sweep clean, but will be careful to sweep no cleaner than he must. W. thinks this may be the end of the Republican party as such. I agree, but the difference is notoriously nominal, and the Democratic party will continue the same abuses; perfidy being an essential part of politics. I cite the axiom that Spencer quotes with approval from some unnamed source, that “wherever government is, there is villainy” – mere party names are nothing. Henry Mencken put it well, that government is “the common enemy of all honest, industrious and decent men.” W. has been long coming to see that, notwithstanding his experience, but I think he sees it now.

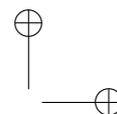
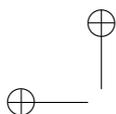




7 March – Well, the collapse I looked for seems to have come sooner than I thought. All the banks in the U.S. are closed, for all I can hear, indefinitely. What a state of mind New York must be in! I have been chuckling all the morning, as I thought of M. van Obbergh’s inimitable impersonation of the Jew, Coppelius, in the *Tales of Hoffmann*, at the Monnaie, when he rushes on the stage, crying, “*Elias a fait banqueroute – je suis volé – moi!*” The world of injured dignity, even outraged majesty, that he puts into that *moi* is beyond description – that he, Coppelius, the prince of sharpers and swindlers, should himself at last be done in the eye! Well, the great business man and great banker of America surely went strong all over the world while the going was good; who could ask more? Artemus Ward had the measure of our financial practices when he said that our bankers were “a sweet and luvly set of men. I’d like to own as good a house as some of ’em would break into.” And the governments, which are controlled by such interests, take the lead in inculcating dishonesty throughout a whole people. Every government that has cheapened its currency has been knavishly false to a trust; so have those which, like ours, use public funds to subsidize large-scale gambling and swindling.

8 March – The French are as a rule close and mercenary in many ways; yet it is interesting to see that when gain is put against art or taste, they pretty regularly waive it. The head waiter and I were talking at dinner-time about some Alsatian wines that I did not know, and he quite insisted on my taking one that was considerably cheaper than the one I had suggested. He was right; it



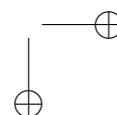
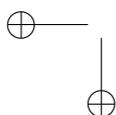


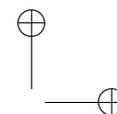
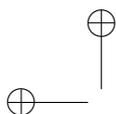
went far better with my dinner. I have often noticed this; a French restaurateur would rather lose money than let you have a wine that did not suit your meal, especially a wine too good for your meal. The same attitude prevails generally, I think, wherever art or taste are involved. It may not in Paris – I do not know Paris well, and never bought anything there, so I can not say – but in the provinces I have found it quite the rule rather than the exception.

*9 March* – A sand path above Cannes is still moist this afternoon after last night's rain. No freak of climate is stranger to me than that a light sunny air so often has no drying power. I have spoken of this before; I notice it again here as, e.g., at Gastein and Vichy. In Brussels, now, such a path as this would be bone-dry twenty minutes after the rain.

*10 March* – I used to be fond of an occasional liqueur like curaçao, chartreuse, bénédictine, but the Alsatian liqueurs, quetsch, mirabelle, mayrtille, framboise, kirsch, have completely killed out my liking for them, so that I would far rather have nothing. The national apéritif of the Low Countries, gin-and-bitters, has done the same thing to me in regard to apéritifs. Two tablespoonfuls of de Kuyper's gin and eight drops of Angostura bitters – that suits me perfectly, and if I can't have it, I prefer to go to dinner dry. I believe the Dutch think better of Bols's gin than of de Kuyper's, but I do not.

*11 March* – Overhearing conversation carried on in a correct idiom by pleasant voices pitched low, one thinks

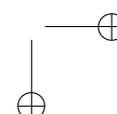
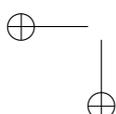


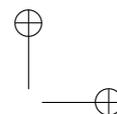
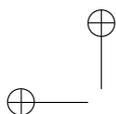


one is listening to highly-cultivated people, but when one looks at them, one sees that they are quite commonplace. The distinction of the language has much to do with this, and also its poverty. French is so poverty-stricken that about the only way a person can say anything intelligible is the right way. It is the richness of a tongue like ours, its limitless vocabulary and its abundance of synonyms, that more than anything, I think, makes for slovenliness in its use.

*12 March* – No wonder France has hardly any unemployment. Apparently she puts all her unemployed on the public pay-roll. One thinks so, at least, at seeing the number of petty jobholders one runs across, half of them doing nothing, and the other half helping them do it. This is an old story over here, and I read in the papers that the taxpayers are getting into one of their recurrent fits of restlessness about it. Much good it will do them, for a bureaucracy is ineradicable as a cancer, when once it gets well rooted. We are beginning to find that out at home; I believe our ratio is now about one in ten – it must be more than that here. One thinks very little of the sense of humour in a people who submit to such a ridiculous assumption – that it takes one out of every ten to govern and floor-manage and dry-nurse the other nine! However, I am off for Hyères and its glorious islands, and am in no mood to take politics in the least to heart.

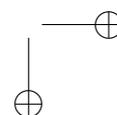
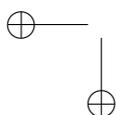
*13 March* – Even in Hyères one sees no English about, and not the sign of an American, though I think few Americans ever did come here. The English really made

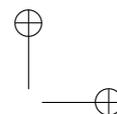
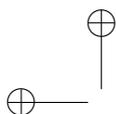




the place, as a resort, mostly for invalids and convalescents. It is interesting to see how the English have impressed the week-end habit and the resort habit on the Continent. Neither the French nor the Germans did anything with either until the English taught them.

*15 March* – Porquerolles, half an hour from the mainland, a delightful island, largest of the group that the Greeks called Stcechades. Not so beautiful or so interesting historically as Port-Cros, but one takes a great shine to it. A good deal of it is under cultivation for vines and vegetables, but it is mostly wild. It is the most frequented of the group, being easiest of access; the trip to Port-Cros is long and usually rough. Superb walks. The cliffs on the eastern and southern coasts are enormous and impressive. Some attempts have been made to plant industries on these islands, but they all came to grief. One concern in heavy chemicals set up here on the west end of Porquerolles; the ruins of the plant and the workmen's dwellings show that it must have been a considerable affair. As M. Charles Richet, president of the Academy of Sciences, says, France has done her utmost in her treatment of these islands – fortunately without success – to disfigure one of her most beautiful possessions. There seems to be a fate against it. Even now the French navy uses the east end of Porquerolles for target practice, which pretty thoroughly discredits – if that were necessary – France's pretence to being a civilized nation. It is really extraordinary, the infallible instinct that governments have for pitching on the most beautiful places to defile with their obscene performances. Look at Newport, one of the most exquisitely sightly

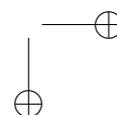
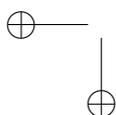


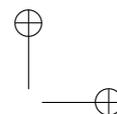
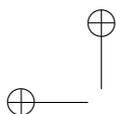


harbours on our coast – would one not know that the swine who manage our navy would plant a station there?

*16 March* – I saw a string of caterpillars three yards long in a path today, proceeding along, head to tail. How did they know where they were going, or did they know? Do they elect a leader, and if so, what are his qualifications; or is he merely a demagogue who “seizes power”? I have seen several of these curious formations, but none so impressive as this; the one I saw at Cannes was about a foot long. When I broke up the formation, the caterpillars went into a huddle, and presently re-formed and went on; it looked curiously like a consultation.

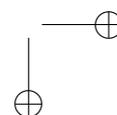
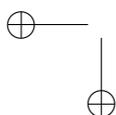
*18 March* – I am hopelessly shiftless and idle, doing nothing but walk and bask in the sun, and glory in my shame. But that is what I am here for. I should like to write something about these islands, but no one would publish it, for their appeal would be to an infinitesimal public in America. Probably we have islands as fine as these, somewhere on our coasts, though I never saw any, and I doubt that we have any which present the same combination of attractions – climate, vegetation, wildness, scenery. But if we could duplicate Port-Cros exactly, one would not feel the same towards it; tradition and history make the difference, and Americans understand neither and are impressed by neither – in fact, as a rule they are rather ostentatious about their indifference to both. Who would care to know, even, much less to feel, that this island of Porquerolles has been the home of four civilizations, Roman, Celtic, Ligurian and Phocæan, and that some scant remains of each still exist? The earliest known

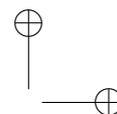
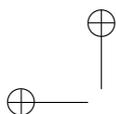




inhabitants were Celts, who were driven off by Ligurians, and these in turn by Phocæan invaders from Marseilles. As for the Romans, coins of twenty-five Roman rulers have been dug up here. The Saracens held it for three centuries of the Christian era – still another civilization. One comes into “the feeling of longevity” that Emerson speaks of, with which one must be thoroughly penetrated if one is ever to gain an adequate sense of contemporary affairs. Cicero was right in saying that a person who grows up without knowing what went before him will always remain a child. One may know it thoroughly, too, in an academic way, and still remain a child. Knowledge has to be reinforced by emotion in order to be maturing.

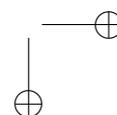
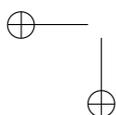
*20 March* – A great gale; I do not remember ever experiencing heavier wind; it lasted all night. I thought the spring rains and storms would be done with by now – they should be. But perhaps this is “Just one of those seasons” that the Riviera has sometimes. In fact, from the reports I got at Cannes, I think it is. When the sea subsides a little, I shall go back to Hyères and then to Port-Cros. There is no means of direct communication among these islands, and no particular need of any, since there is no one but a lighthouse-keeper on Levant (next largest after Porquerolles, about six miles long), no one at all on Bagaud, and only some eighteen or twenty on Port-Cros. Grand-Ribaud, something under a square mile, is owned by three men of science who live there in the summer, one of them the eminent and honoured Richet. This savant conducted the celebrated experiments with the Italian medium, Eusapia Palladino, on Grand-Ribaud.

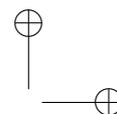
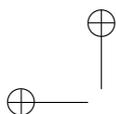




*22 March* – Port-Cros at last, on a beautiful day. The owner of the island has the notion of making it a resort, and a handful of people do stray here; probably more would come if there were something better than an antiquated motor-launch to transport them over a dozen miles of uncertain water. On landing, you see the strangest sight on the whole coast, a hotel that looks strangely like a country-clubhouse in a small American town. It is really very good and not expensive, but no end art-and-crafty. The fact is, it is an imitation-Provençal style of thing, plus modern conveniences, and any imitation-style of anything, plus modern conveniences, is bound to look *echt*-American. What sets it off here, of course, is the contrast with the dozen dwellings around it, all of which are old, genuine and unpretentious. On the way over, we went close by a French battleship named for Condorcet; it made me wonder whether the French ever see anything incongruous in the names they give their war-machines. They even have, or had, one ship called the *Ernest Renan*. Probably it is an instructive effort to memorialize these great men with the best they have and the best they can do, all of which lies in the line of fighting. The French do other things well, but nothing so well as war-making.

*23 March* – How fine it is to be on a place like this island, which nature has immunized against nearly all the petty distractions which debase and vulgarize our life. In our social sense of the word, there is not only nothing to “do” here, but no possibility of anything. No golf; no motoring, no means of getting about but on one’s feet; the whole terrain is too broken and uneven for any kind

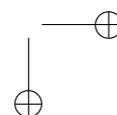
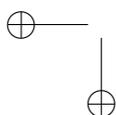


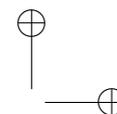
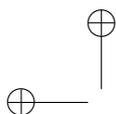


of road anywhere – nothing but paths. At the same time, nature seems to have given the island every good thing she has to give. One would say that every herb and flower in creation is here, and the sun brings out a marvellous fragrance from them. The apothecaries of Montpellier, in the sixteenth century, used to herborize here, and it is supposed that Rabelais came over with them and got acquainted with the islands in that way. Port-Cros has always been by its nature a resort for men of thought and letters; it is the one island of the group that has been celebrated by writers, from Nostradamus down. Lamartine, Fr. Mistral, the viscount Melchior de Vogüé, Henry Bordeaux, Paul Bourget, the marquis Costa de Beauregard, the new Academician Abel Bonnard, have all sung its praise in company with a host of smaller fry.

*24 March* – A pretty Frenchwoman is worth mention; I never saw more than three that I can remember, and one would have no trouble about remembering all one saw, for they seem to be a kind of *lusus naturæ*. I saw one at Porquerolles, a copper blonde about twenty-five years old. Her copper tint was authentic, for when she raised her arms she showed great tufts of hair of the same shade. I have often wondered why a depilated armpit is repulsive to me; it is illogical and whimsical, for shaven faces do not produce the same effect, and they are quite as unnatural.

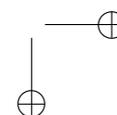
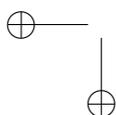
*25 March* – I learned that the caterpillars I saw the other day are called *processional*, and are peculiar to these regions. I saw another string of them even longer than the last, fully four yards. One can make interesting

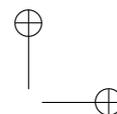
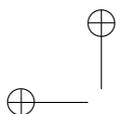




experiments with them. Take one out of the middle of the string, and the front section will stop until the rear section moves up and closes the gap. Take off the leader, and the string goes on under the second in command; but take one out of the middle and put him at the head of the line, and he will not be accepted; the line stops in more or less confusion, while he goes back along it and breaks in again, somewhere near his old place. If the hair of these caterpillars touches the skin, it will bring out a rash.

I learned, too, that since I was here last, a couple of houses have been put up on the island of Bagaud by people who come there for the summer. Also that a “naturist” colony has settled on the beautiful island of Levant, and is apparently flourishing. It is engineered by a couple of Parisian doctors, who get out quite an elaborate weekly magazine in support of their doctrines. The colonists do the regular thing, as far as I can make out; they wear no clothes, exercise, eat vegetables, etc. They are against alcohol and tobacco. One wonders why these notions so seldom come singly in people, especially in one who is of a propagandizing turn. He is not satisfied to have you go naked, for instance, and let it go at that; he wants you to be a vegetarian, quit drinking, join the League of Nations, stop smoking cigarettes, and probably become a Bahaite or something of the sort – a whole impossiblist programme. Moreover, he is usually a great hand for colonizing; why could he not go through all that performance just as well by himself at home? I give such people a wide berth. I would like never to wear any clothes, and never do when I can help it, but can’t swallow the other articles of faith, or stomach the



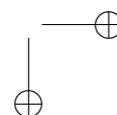
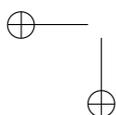


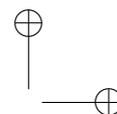
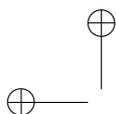
thought of colonies. I think, with Epictetus, that it is the sign of a badly balanced nature to make a great fuss about all such things as ought to be done incidentally, if at all. Levant is a grand place for such people, however, and they might better have it than that it should remain deserted. There was a great monastic establishment on Levant in the fifteenth century, and it is amusing to think of these modern energumens coming in to replace those of old.

*26 March* – Today I went around to the Plage du Sud, then up along the cliffs, climbed over Mont Vinaigre, the highest point of the island, and back by way of the Fausse-Monnaie. The cliffs are terrifying; they are five hundred feet high, sheer perpendicular, and the effect of erosion heightens their savage aspect. It does not do to go too near their edge. It seems strange that the south side of all these islands should present this sinister appearance, while the north side is smiling and gentle.

*27 March* – Night-birds fly into this cove from the sea, uttering loud and harsh cries that are sometimes rather dreadful to hear; they sound like bursts of insane cackling laughter. I think these birds are gulls, but I am not sure; probably they are, but I never heard gulls cry like this on our coasts at night.

*28 March* – Provençal cooking runs a leetle too strong to fried food to suit me, and I find the soups tend to set up an intestinal fermentation that is disagreeable. I think, too, that the *bouillabaisse* is a vastly overrated dish. Casandre told me she had eaten it in Marseilles, and found

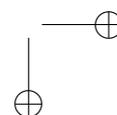
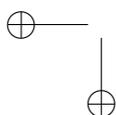


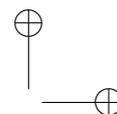
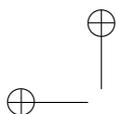


it very fine, though I hardly see how that can be, unless they imported something better than Mediterranean fish to build it with. In my humble judgment, Mediterranean fish, the *langouste* included, is as valueless for food as our Pacific coast fish. I would not give ten cents a bushel for any I ever ate, no matter how they were prepared. French fish from the other coasts is superb, most of it, but not from this coast.

*29 March* – I walked over to Port-Man, at the east end of the island; one can go there and back in a couple of hours or so. I have now covered the island pretty well, and my sentiment for it is stronger than ever. I am sure it will never be over-run or vulgarized; not in my time, anyway. For self-contained and natural loveliness, I know of no place like it; one repossesses one's soul and re-orders its dishevelments without effort.

*30 March* – Some stray French papers that have come over are in hysterics over Hitler's anti-semitism; I suppose they are a sample of the whole French press, than which there is nothing more meretricious and subversive of all decency. In principle, as the politicians say when they want to window-dress some rascality or other, I am all against the anti-Jewish campaign – if ten per cent of the reports of it are true – but I can't help seeing something on the other side. It is like the Turkish atrocities that used to stir the righteous soul of old Cleveland H. Dodge, years ago. I was on the side of the Armenians, but had to hold my nose meanwhile, thinking of the proverb, "Two Jews, one Greek; two Greeks, one Persian; two Persians, one Armenian." By comparison, the Turk was,

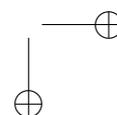
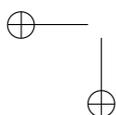


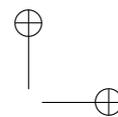
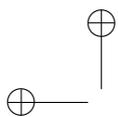


and is, a pretty good fellow. The trouble was that a couple of Armenians would settle in a Turkish village, and in six months they would be holding first and second mortgages on every stick of property that the easy-going agrarian villagers had, and the only way out of that situation seemed to be by slaying the Armenians. At that, I would have been a deal more interested in the oppressed Armenians if they had been championed by somebody besides Cleveland H. Dodge.

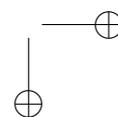
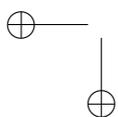
This mountainous island is really not excessively high as such go, but it is high enough to remind me all the time that mountain-climbing, as a sport, seems to me to pay poor dividends; I never got my investment back out of my few small ventures. I think the natural patron of all high-grade first-class mountain-climbers would be the Good Old Duke of York. Yet on this island one must climb if one moves at all, and one rather enjoys it as one goes along; the achievement of reaching the top anywhere is nothing. I understand that the true mountain-climber gets his satisfaction, whatever it is, out of the sense of having accomplished something, which is incomprehensible to me.

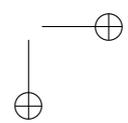
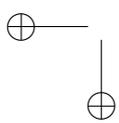
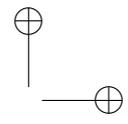
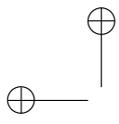
*31 March* – I watched a schooner-load of coal being put off for this hotel – about ten tons, I should say. All by hand-labour, with the help of one donkey. I wonder whether most of our labour-saving devices have really saved anything worth saving. They seem only to result in more and harder labour all round, so my notion is that they re-distribute labour rather than save it. Henry George attacked this problem, in *Progress and Poverty*,

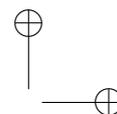
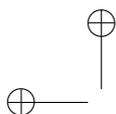




and solved it; but his solution, being valid, will not be accepted in a hurry.



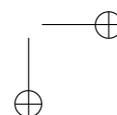
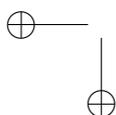


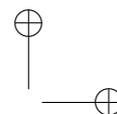
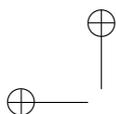


## 1933 April

*1 April* – I ran across a charming little piece by the new Academician, Abel Bonnard, which revived all my old repugnance to our idea that length of life is something in itself worth striving for – the idea fostered by the Life Extension Institute and innumerable other agencies. It is the quality of life that counts, not its length, and America has not, and never has had, the faintest notion of regarding human life as a quality-product, but only as a standard product, like American merchandise. I never encounter our intense preoccupation with health and long life without asking myself, What for? One wonders what America would make of Julius Cæsar's observation that life is not worth having at the expense of an ignoble solicitude about it.

*4 April* – I must leave Port-Cros. Being here has done me an incalculable amount of good, in body and soul. I have the reluctance to write about Port-Cros that one has towards trying to put one's profoundest sentiments in black and white. It is no place for any but a very small elect; none but a true Rabelaisian would take the trouble

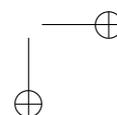
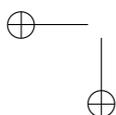


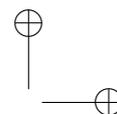
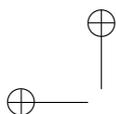


to come here or care to stay here; so much the better! I have been reading the viscount Melchior de Vogüé's *Jean d'Agrève*, which has its scene laid here. As a novel, I suppose it is rather unpretending, but its descriptions of Port-Cros are superb; nothing could be better.

5 April – A bothersome bit of business took me back to Cannes for a day, before going on; another delightful word with Whitlock reconciled me to it. He had been nibbling with very long teeth at D. H. Lawrence, and was intensely disgusted, to my great amusement, for I had laboured hard with *Sons and Lovers* two years ago, and had to give up at about two-thirds of the way through. "There's a lowlife for you!" Whitlock said, dropping into Montague Glass's idiom, and really, that is about as well as one can put it. Lawrence may have been a gifted individual, but he certainly had a deal of the grime and grubbiness of adolescence sticking to him. Reading *Sons and Lovers* made me wonder whether he ever washed behind his ears; and at that, I am told it is his best work.

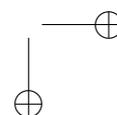
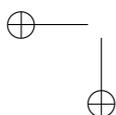
7 April – Going out from Marseilles to Gibraltar in an American ship, one of the new ones of the Export Line. A capital dinner at Pascal's restaurant before leaving, with what they assured me was genuine *bouillabaisse* – excellent. I see that Cassandre was right about that. It is a grand dish, and all I have been eating under that name is a mere *Ersatz*. But what a horrible place Marseilles is! One lives in constant dread of everything from assassination to Asiatic cholera, all the time one is here.

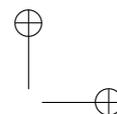
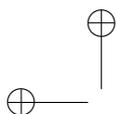




8 April – This voyage makes the strangest impression on me. I once heard Cassandre say that every American living in Europe should somehow, every three months, be plumped into the thick of American life for two days and then dragged out again. I see now what she meant – something to remind us of the pit whence we were digged, and also as a kind of *memento mori*. “Come quick, O death, lest I too forget myself,” said Marcus Aurelius, as he surveyed the works and ways of the Roman mass-man, that remarkable composite of Ford, Hughes and Hoover. From the point of view of the passenger, this ship is the best-arranged of any I ever saw – the best I could imagine; it is perfect, it is the ideal American middle-class home set afloat; and it is full of ideal American middle-class people, substantial, kind, good, affable, likeable. Well, now, what is there about all this that would make the student of civilized man yearn to leap overboard and swim for refuge to any ramshackle Italian tramp or bug-ridden Portuguese hooker that came along? Simply that the life it typifies is so *uninteresting*, so without savour, so contentedly lived from such a shallow depth of being. *Was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine* – there it is! *Das Gemeine* washed up and well dressed, well-to-do, and thoroughly penetrated with a superb indifference to becoming anything different, indeed ignorant that there is anything different to become.

9 April – We stopped at Palma; it looked uninviting, rather like the American colony at Paris or Florence, with no-whither to escape. Going about the Mediterranean gives one a deal of respect for the enterprise and skill of the Carthaginian navigators, and especially of the naval

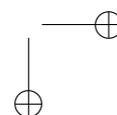
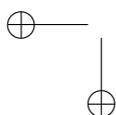


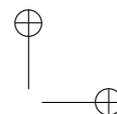
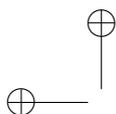


officers, like Adherbal and Hanno. It is a pity that we get so much of that history only from prejudiced sources; one would like to hear the Punic side of it, for a change.

Yesterday being Palm Sunday, the reverend canon Crawshay of St. Alban's Cathedral, who is making passage with us, was due to expound the Scriptures at 10:30 A.M., in the social hall. Fog since early morning; the social hall is directly under the foghorn. But at 10:15 the fog lifted, and it closed down again at exactly ten minutes after the reverend canon got through proclaiming the Word. This coincidence might be held to show that the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers. I have my doubts of it, however; not that I doubt the fact, for I do not, but I doubt the validity of that whole order of proof. If I had been around when Aaron's rod budded, or turned into a serpent, I should have said it proved only that Aaron was a very smart man.

The ship's wine-list and its library are an interesting study. The list plays up hardly anything but Sauterne and St.-Julien. The library carries an even hundred innocuous and tepid volumes; the only thing I found there that was of any conceivable interest to anybody beyond the elementary stages of literacy was Mr. Asbury's history of gang-life in New York; a book which should be read by those who think gang-rule and racketeering are something new, or that their hypertrophy is a modern development. The library-annex comprises twenty-two prayer-books, twenty-three hymnals, one Bible, and two copies of *Science and Health*. Verily I say again, this ship is an ideal American middle-class home afloat. There is

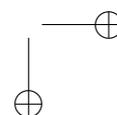
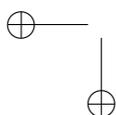


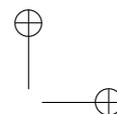
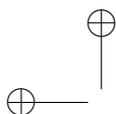


even a phonograph in the dining-room – God save us! – playing Nevin’s *Rosary*.

*10 April* – Gibraltar, then Algeciras, fit scene for the political skullduggery brewed in the famous treaty. Then Seville, by bus, a ghastly hard ride as far as Jerez, over the mountains. One works one’s passage around Spain, whether by rail or road; it is the most mountainous country in Europe except Switzerland, and most of it is barren and forbidding in the extreme. It makes one realize what a fellow George Borrow must have been to go clambering around its fastnesses, distributing Bibles. Thinking over that extraordinary ship and its contents, I am impressed by the evidence that ship-life, like club-life, requires a good deal of experience and tradition for the development of its proper technique. The reason, for instance, why women have no club-etiquette or club-technique is merely that they have not been at it long enough to develop them.

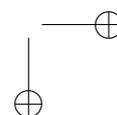
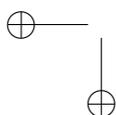
*11 April* – I enjoy being in a country where I do not know a word of the language. It is amusing to put together shreds and patches of other tongues to make known one’s simplest wants. An odd thing – I do not pretend to speak any language well, even English, and while I can rub along at a sort of conversation in one or two foreign languages, they remain always foreign to me. Yet here, when I hear tourists speaking German, French, Italian, Flemish (for a convoy of 125 Belgians came in for Holy Week) in the midst of the current Spanish, each language seems to me like my own native tongue.

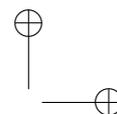
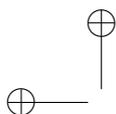




12 April – I have been doing the regular things, churches, pictures, streets, gardens, houses, in the regular way, and giving them all, I imagine, the regular response. On the way up from Algeciras, I was struck by the absence of roadside signs – testimony to a wholesome and enviable illiteracy, I suppose. I also admired the cactus fences; four feet thick, of solid cactus. As against barbed wire, nature scores her usual easy triumph over art; no creature in its right mind but will respect that cactus at sight and keep away from it. Moreover, the cactus is ornamental, which barbed wire is not. At Algeciras I noticed four large posters advertising Spain’s tourist-attractions; one was in English, one in American, one French, one German. The German poster said that Spain is *malerisch und vielgestaltig*, with many touches of characteristic folk-life. The French one stated that the attractions of Spain are to be had at a *prix incroyable*. The English one set forth the advantages of Spain at all four seasons of the year; and the American one had but the one eloquent line “Spain Is Different!” I thought that the gifted publicity-man who devised these posters must be a real horse-doctor in his line, for he managed to hit the master-concern of each nation’s travelling public exactly in the bull’s-eye: France, thrift; England, climate; Germany, culture; America, novelty.

I also notice the wholesome, sturdy and generally happy look of the children; it would seem that the rachitic ones are very rare or else kept out of sight. Everything is vastly cleaner than I have been led to suppose it would be, even including those of the people, children and adults, who are above the pauper class. This may be a local peculiarity, as it is here and there in France, though I

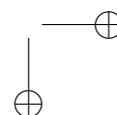
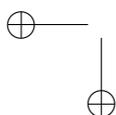


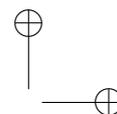
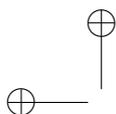


never saw it carried to such excess anywhere in France. Again, maybe the Republic is carrying on a campaign – I don't know. What puzzles me most is the absence of flies, mosquitoes and varmints generally here in Seville. I can not account for it. Perhaps this is the wrong time of year; yet it must be fly-time in some sort, for I have seen flies here and there, especially around the markets, but very few. I am sure I have seen many more beggars than flies, taking one day with another.

Seville keeps fully up to its traditional reputation in the matter of pretty young women, as it does in the matter of beggars. Pretty girls are thicker here than I ever saw them anywhere but in Brussels. They seem rather short-bodied and long-legged to suit my notion of a figure, but there is no discount on their faces. They do not look as intelligent as the keen Belgian type that I admire so much, but they are very animated and handsome.

The beggars swarm on one everywhere. There is really no satisfaction in trying to look at anything. Babies are bred to mendicancy, as the sparks fly upward; I never saw or dreamed of anything like it. They are taught the English words *penny* and *money* before they are weaned. There is no protection from them. When a crew of ash-cats and their mothers assail one, the police look on unmoved, and the better class of natives seem to have no pity on one's helplessness. Spain is making a great drive for a share in the tourist trade, and I can not understand why the authorities do not suppress this nuisance, as other European countries have done. I have revised my notion of the haughty Spaniard's pride since I came to Seville. Spain's grandiose and capable malefactors are gone. Their successors are mere vermin,

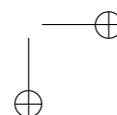
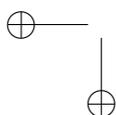


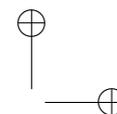
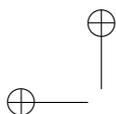


fit only to become the financiers and statesmen of a modern republic.

*14 April* – The gardens, interiors, grillwork, fruits and flowers here are beyond praise; I never saw anything to compare with them. I thought I knew what good oranges were, but I see now that this was just another mistake of mine. Republican Seville is shorn of its former gorgeousness, even in Holy Week, but as far as the importunity of filthy starvelings will permit, one can rejoice in all these things. One of the most charming sights one sees is the rows of ornamented porcelain jars in the apothecaries' shops. They are quite mediæval. I suppose the drugs they contain are the same sort as those prescribed by Albucasis, Averroës, Bonetus, and other erstwhile lights of the profession. Probably I could even get a prescription put up *secundem artem* out of the pharmacopœia of the great Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim, surnamed Bombastus. However, I shall not try.

*15 April* – People here seem to have a little better pedestrian traffic-sense than most Europeans; not much, but some. The French and Italians are the worst in this respect, and the Germans almost as bad. It is a nuisance, but one must remember that it is only the reverse side of their wholesome individualism. I remember when Americans got dreadfully worked up over stories of people being elbowed off the sidewalks by soldiers; but the soldiers did it, not because they were soldiers but because they were Europeans. One is elbowed off the sidewalk far oftener by French civilians than by French soldiers,

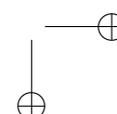
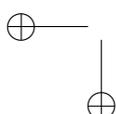


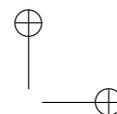
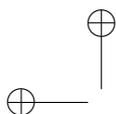


merely because there are fewer soldiers about than there are civilians.

*16 April* – The traditional Spanish headgear looks queer and anomalous atop of bobbed hair and short skirts, but such is republicanism, I suppose. When “the revolt of the masses” comes in force, the first thing to go seems to be the sense for fitness, taste, the dignity, beauty and poetry of human life. I have been reading Aldous Huxley’s bitter satire called *Brave New World*, and I appreciate it. Who cares to live in a régime of sheer *Fordismus*, such as he describes? It is simply not interesting. I am above all things thankful that the Lord’s mercy permitted me to live out of America most of the time since 1920 and thus escape contact with its social and economic manias and puerilities – and now to escape contact with the beer mania! What an exhibition it has been! Speaking of Aldous Huxley, there seems to be a little touch of old Thomas Henry’s pungency in him; not much, but what there is is unmistakable.

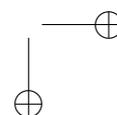
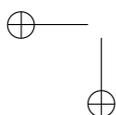
*17 April* – I never saw so many French people quartered under one roof outside France, as there are in this hotel. I thought there was no such thing as a French tourist, nor do I see why there should be, since the French have everything in their own country that a tourist would ordinarily seek. I wonder what they gain by coming here, especially since they seem rather a commonplace sort. Germans also abound; they turn out early, and investigate everything with characteristic thoroughness. Some English have come down, but not many, and I have not seen a dozen Americans here all the week.

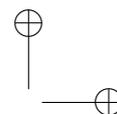
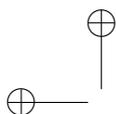




*18 April* – Córdoba impresses me more pleasantly than Seville, though I am not in love with it. One wishes that when the Christians took over the mosque they had let it remain as it was instead of encysting a piece of wretched architecture in the middle of it. The cathedral at Seville lends itself better to Christian ritual than any other that I know of, even in the matter of acoustics, though that does not count for so much of late. Papa Sarto was a lovely man and a great saint, but he put a sad damper on Christian music. I can listen to Gregorian tones a long time if they are sung with a free accompaniment on the organ, but sung alone they soon become a bore. I have heard yards and yards of them this week, and do not care a button if I never hear them more. The Church is going down-hill under the republic – another sacrifice of beauty and poetry, and methinks needless. It had a firm hold here, but overplayed its hand and became oppressive. One wishes it had been wise enough to trust to its immense talent for making itself loved, instead of taking the perilous course of making itself feared. It might well have heeded the strong common sense of Tiberius Cæsar’s saying that “offences against the gods are the gods’ lookout.” One is sometimes curious about what would have happened in the world but for the relatively trivial accidents of Galilee being a hotbed of sedition, and of Tiberius’s procurator being new, and not yet quite up to his job.

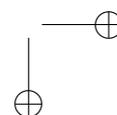
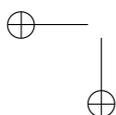
*19 April* – Seville again, and a peaceful day in the Alcazar’s gardens, and in the old part of town; all the mendicant riffraff of Seville being out at the great annual fair. I shall go out there myself this evening to look at

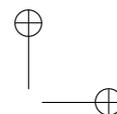
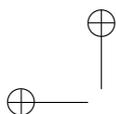




some Spanish dancing, which I like best of all, better even than the Russian dances. It is all amateur dancing at these fairs, done for the fun of it, by rich and poor together. The Alcazar's gardens suggest strongly that the Moors pretty well knew how to live; they built substantial houses, and seem to have used their out-doors in a most intelligent way. I remember Cassandre's saying that the Moorish ladies would probably have larfed hearty if an aggressive American feminist had come in and harangued them about freedom and bade them go forth and sweat in the trades and professions. As a matter of fact, there are precious few people who are at all interested in the *principle* of freedom; and in my experience, those who profess and call themselves liberals are least interested in it and most ignorant about it. Such interest in freedom as I have seen boils down to a mere resentment of some inconvenience, usually trivial.

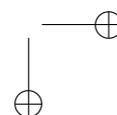
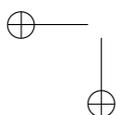
*20 April* – Next to the beggars, the most pestilent people in Seville – and one comes to think that next to the beggars they are the most numerous economic class – are the street-vendors, shoeblacks, shrimp-sellers and purveyors of lottery-tickets. These last are innumerable, like our erstwhile bond-salesmen; one wonders so many of them live, and above all, why they should live. I have thought that perhaps the republic disposes of its unemployment problem in this way. I am leaving Spain today, having seen only Seville and Córdoba, and with all my admiration for the many admirable things here, I leave with no regret and no disposition to return. The people are restless and fermenting; strikes and assassinations go on. Four bakers were shot a few nights ago, and the next

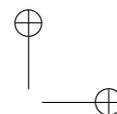
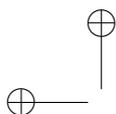




night I heard the shots that killed a physician suspected of Communism; and all sorts of subversive inscriptions are chalked up on walls at nearly every street-corner, while jails and barracks are full of political prisoners. I was told that there are 350 of them hived up in Córdoba. One's sense of these matters is sharpened by one's conviction of the huge proportion of worthlessness in the population at large, and one sees a great deal of very grim humour in the thought that one has here the makings of a modern republic. One would think that these countries might well have taken a look at some of the older republics to see how the system works before committing themselves to it. Germany notably would have made money by doing that, and my impression is that Spain would.

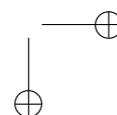
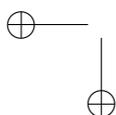
*21 April* – I came into Lisbon late last night after a tedious journey, during which my thoughts, most of the time after nightfall, went back to dwell on Port-Cros. Beautiful island, so unknown, so isolated, so unravaged, the natural home of everything that modern life disallows and disparages, the home of beauty, romance, poetry, history, tradition, where *la bassesse de l'homme intéressé* has no place and nothing on which to feed, the one spot where it finds that the gods are inflexibly against it, *dii terrent et Jupiter hostis!* Perhaps I did not say quite enough about the viscount de Vogüé's novel in the way of praise for it on other grounds beside its fine descriptions of Port-Cros, but I was rather oppressed by the sense of its being essentially outmoded for modern readers. Probably no one under forty could believe that such people as Jean d'Agrève and Hélène ever really existed,

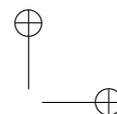
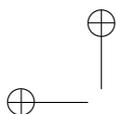




ever really thought, felt and acted as they did; but they did exist, to my own knowledge, and I can not see why such a story is an offence against realism. In the view of the modern novelist, love is apparently reducible to sheer transactions carried on *inter stercus et urinam*, and this, I suppose, passes for a realistic view; but I doubt that the human spirit will be permanently satisfied with it, and hence I doubt that the works which reflect it will have any place in literature. Novelists may yet rediscover sentiment as being quite as much a reality as trees and boulders, or even as the determination of blood to this or that part of the human body.

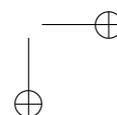
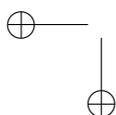
*23 April* – I shall take it precious easy in Lisbon for a day or two, for I feel greatly out of sorts. What little I have seen of the town pleases me, but it is a noisy place, and the hotels all seem to be situated where it is noisiest. I am too done in to notice anything but trifles; for instance, the large number of shoe-shining establishments, occurring as often as in New York. This is the only European city I know of that has them, though I saw many itinerant shoe-blacks in Seville. One sees here the interesting survivals of a very varied and extensive miscegenation. In the early days, apparently, the Portuguese navigators picked up girls that pleased them from all parts of the world, and brought them home; so that now one sees features that run back to South Americans, Annamese, and all sorts of strains. This sort of thing seems to produce very good results; I believe anthropologists regard it favourably. The mixture of Celt, Saxon and Norman, which we now call English, has certainly made a good stock.

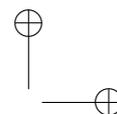
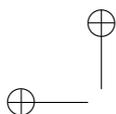




*24 April* – I am greatly impressed by the number and quality of the bookstores in Lisbon. They are an interesting and an encouraging sight. The whole population of Portugal is less than New York City's, and I hear that 70 per cent of it is illiterate, which, if so, makes the reading public very small. It is astonishing to estimate, roughly, the number of bookstores that New York, or any American city, would have if they stood in the same proportion to the number of people who are able to read. The literate Portuguese, moreover, seems able to manage French and Spanish as well as his own tongue, for the shops carry a large stock in both languages. English books are few and of a low order, mostly shilling shockers; and there are hardly any German books, except in translations. All this sets one thinking afresh about the social value of a wide-spread, indiscriminate literacy. I am much tempted to write something on this topic, and when I get myself together, perhaps I shall; but one is so jaded by travel that one hardly knows what one will do or can do.

*27 April* – I have been three days at Sintra, recuperating and doing some leisurely sightseeing by aid of a droshky and a good pair, guided by a grand fellow, as ingratiating and characterful a chap as ever drove horses. We understood each other well, though neither of us could speak a word – probably – that the other had ever heard before. How much better the eyes are at communicating thought than the tongue is, provided they are the right kind! I did the regular tours at Sintra, very lazily, being too ill and unambitious to put one foot before the other. There is no discount on the universal praise of Sintra; of its

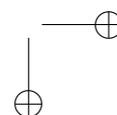
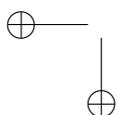


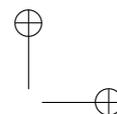
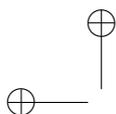


kind, I believe there is nothing finer in the world. I was especially struck with the old Capuchin monastery, and with the drive one takes to reach it. Those brethren must have had a hard life. I hope they have their reward in a better world, for they got little enough out of this one.

*28 April* – The remoteness of this country from mine is almost past belief. I learn that the United States has abandoned the gold standard, though I can not make out why or wherefore. One can get English newspapers in Lisbon some time in the course of a week, so I may have news of all this later, if I try, though I know well enough in a general way what Mr. Roosevelt's doings and misdoings will amount to, because I know what mine would amount to if I were his kind of man and in his place, so why read about them? When the Presidency goes to a man who does not seek it and does not want it, I shall be interested in what takes place, but not before; and I believe this has happened but once in our history, in 1800. John Randolph's forcible testimony to the absolute disinterestedness of Mr. Jefferson ought to be taken as final, if any be needed, for Randolph was a bitter enemy. Mr. Roosevelt is no Cincinnatus; his manifest scheming for the job gives his measure; and as Mr. Jefferson said, "When once a man has cast a longing eye on offices, a rottenness begins in his conduct."

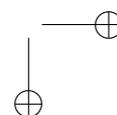
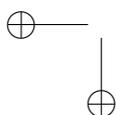
*29 April* – I am struck by the cheapness and excellence of food. I get a superb dinner, and more of it than I should think anyone could eat, for thirty-eight cents, including a bottle of first-rate wine, exactly to my taste. Portugal abounds in splendid wines, and at the moment

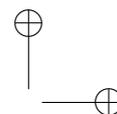
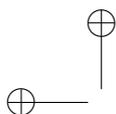




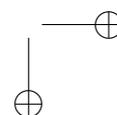
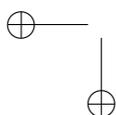
they are as cheap in Lisbon as bottled water – another fine commodity in which Portugal abounds. I hardly see how one could spend a dollar for a meal in this town; some day I shall try. Prices are reckoned in *escudos* (pronounced *scoots*, as well as my ear can catch the sound) and the scoot comes to a trifle under four cents; the dinner I speak of costs nine scoots and a half, which seems to be the average price. In fact, prices all round seem curiously uniform, more nearly so than in any other country I know. One of the minor comforts of life during the last two months has been to be among people who do not know anything about vitamins, carbohydrates, etc., but who go in for grub – fine, tasty grub, and plenty of it. I dare say this Portuguese diet will kill a man ultimately if he persists in it long enough, but I think it is far more decent to die that way than bedevilled to death by quacks, cranks and nostrum-peddlars.

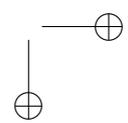
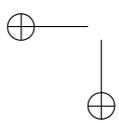
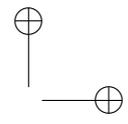
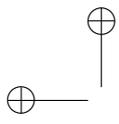
*30 April* – The church of St. Roque and its museum are well worth visiting; I did it this morning. In the afternoon I went out to Belem, and looked over the monastery. The English guide-book gives a good account of this, but is rather slighting towards St. Roque; the French guide-book is in all respects better than Muirhead's. What one should go to St. Roque for is the goldsmith's work and embroidery, the like of which is hard to find. At Belem one may rest content with considering the Manueline type of architecture. The adjacent museum of antiquities is a good one, but has only a few objects over which one need spend much time, if one has seen the Roman remains elsewhere. One wastes a deal of time and energy on museums, I think; by far the best thing is to find

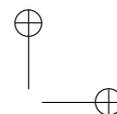
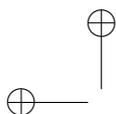




out beforehand what one wants to see, and spend one's time over that. I remember Lincoln Colcord's story of being the guest of a rich Chinese dignitary at a sort of afternoon garden-party. Half a dozen Chinamen were present, profoundly polite and dignified, and all hands sat around in conversation while tea was served. Then the host brought out one object of art, a piece of porcelain, as I remember, very fine and valuable, but only one – no more – and put it down among them. They spent the rest of the afternoon over it, talking of nothing else, studying and admiring its qualities, and learning its history; in a word, letting its whole flavour soak in thoroughly. That seems to me a much more intelligent way to cultivate a sound and active taste than to put in time indiscriminately over great collections.

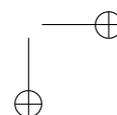
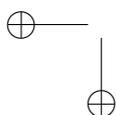


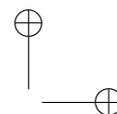
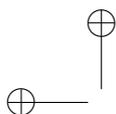




### 1933 May

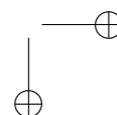
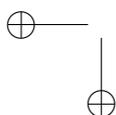
*1 May* – Police surveillance is most annoying here. One’s passport is in demand all the time and checked up at every turn, which seems nonsensical when one’s character and intentions are once established; nonsensical in any case, indeed, for no amount of that sort of thing was ever really effective anywhere. Our government has always managed reasonably well in matters of this kind – and still does – to give the appearance of liberty without the reality. It seems always to have been aware that what Mr. Jefferson called “the disgusting particularities” of civil administration are the most irritating and convey the strongest sense of infringement on one’s rightful freedom, and are therefore best avoided. I am sure one has more actual freedom in Portugal than in the United States – as one certainly had under the old régime in Germany – but the disgusting particularities of police interference make one feel that one has very little. In Germany one’s civil rights were firmly established, and it was as much in one’s own interest as in society’s that the police kept one counted up, but one resented the nuisance instinctively. In the United States no one, citizen or alien, has actually

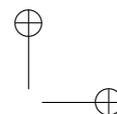
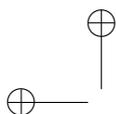




any established rights that any ignorant and venal Jack-in-office need respect, or any personal liberty that is not subject to arbitrary invasion and annulment; but the absence of routine police surveillance makes one feel that one has an unlimited allowance of both.

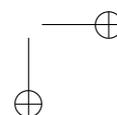
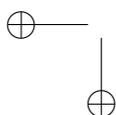
*2 May* – Being here is wonderfully like being in France or Germany years ago, before touring was organized as an international big business, and when serious people took travel seriously. It does one a world of good. Portugal, however, is beginning to make a strong bid for part of the English and German tourist trade, so anyone who wishes to see it as it is should come here within a year or so, the sooner the better. Some of the towns are being smartened up; Sintra is already by way of being a tourist-centre of sorts. One wonders whether all this does not cost more than it is worth. It brings in nothing but money, and as an offset, whole sections of the population are vulgarized and depraved. I have seen many regions of France and Germany before and after they were overrun by tourists, and I know whereof I speak. In these days of passports, surveillances and inquisitions, it seems to me that some country might do itself a good turn by establishing a strict cultural test for tourists, as a measure of self-defence, like our silly formulas for keeping out anarchists and adulteresses. Portugal might set a wholesome fashion by doing this. Suppose, for instance, an American came in for a visa with a passport marked “travel,” the Portuguese consul in New York would say, “Sorry, but my government demands unimpeachable evidence that you are a man of high culture, and that you have a specific cultural

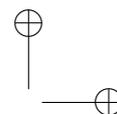
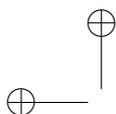




purpose in mind for coming to Portugal. We are very particular about this, as particular as your government is about moral character and political opinions – we are not interested in those. It is not enough to say you want to go places and see things; we must know very specifically why, and all about it. If you satisfy us of this, we shall make it our business to serve you in every way and give you the best we have, which will not be made up to resemble the kind of thing you have at home, but will be the best we have as we have it. You may ride free on our railways, we will arrange introductions for you, and get preferential treatment for you in every possible direction, as an honoured guest. But if you do not satisfy us, we do not think your interests or ours would be furthered by your presence in our country, and we can not admit you.” The Low Countries and their peoples are dearer to me than all the rest of the world put together, and I have often wished they would do something of this kind. For a long time, indeed, Holland was very stiff about encouraging the tourist horde, but finally gave way. As for Belgium, the tradition of freedom is so deep-set in the Belgians that they are very unhandy about going against it in any way, for which the Lord be praised! What a great people they are, and what a great country they have! If one could but live the year round in Belgium’s terrific climate, I would never be found elsewhere, I think, except to go down to Luxembourg in late May, or perhaps to make one more visit to Port-Cros before I die.

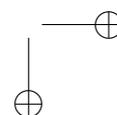
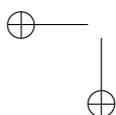
3 *May* – At Estoril, the fashionable beach-resort of Portugal, but only for the afternoon – anyone may have my

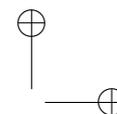
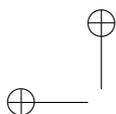




share. The railway skirts the river all the way down. I notice that the Lisbonites are as careless of the river's beauty as Americans are of theirs, and defile it with factories and ramshackle warehouses, etc., as we do. This is a pity, for the Tagus would be a sightly stream, if used decently. Also I noticed at Estoril that most of the buildings had lightning-rods, whereas the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says Portugal is seldom visited by thunderstorms. Are they a local peculiarity of Estoril; or did an uncommonly persuasive lightning-rodder pass that way; or when they do have a storm down there, is it what Zebe Parsons used to call "one of the old kind"? I must ask about this, for I have not happened to notice rods in Lisbon itself, though it is true I have not borne in mind to look carefully. English residents largely live at Estoril, and do business in Lisbon. I judge that the joys and sorrows of the commuter here are about what they are elsewhere. The dining-room of the hotel was tenanted exclusively by Englishers at lunch, most of them apparently valetudinarians, down here for the climate – a depressing spectacle.

4 *May* – Hearing Portuguese spoken, it strikes me that an American could master the intonation better than anyone. Our sibilant sounds, diphthongal vowels and scamped syllables would help him out. When Cassandre heard it on the Cape, she said that if you got an American about half drunk on Prohibition gin and then set him to speaking French, he would pretty well hit the authentic Portuguese intonation, as the stranger hears it. There are many Portuguese on the Cape, and some over Nantucket

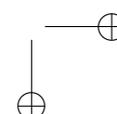
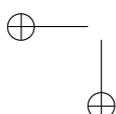


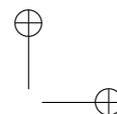
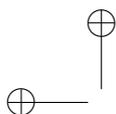


way, and quite a colony of them, I believe, on Jamestown Island.

*5 May* – To Evora by rail. Portuguese railways have a five and a half foot gauge, and the lunatics who lay them out do not stagger the rails. The only piece of track I ever saw on the Continent that did not have matched rails is a stretch between Liège and Aachen, and I have never ceased to wonder why this idiocy prevails elsewhere. Evora is interesting and charming. It is a great thing for a Rabelaisian to examine the library of the Inquisition and see the authentic first editions of the writers he cites so plentifully – Panormitanus, Bartholus, Accursius, etc. It gives one a stirring sense of their reality. There is a fine lot of them, too, in the Columbus library at Seville. I got the notion from Don Cristoforo’s marginal notes that are on exhibition there, that he was a much more erudite person than I had supposed.

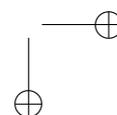
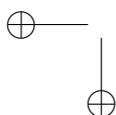
*6 May* – The principal hotel here in Evora is in the Palace of the Inquisition; the building seems to be much as it was. The room below mine had its windows suggestively barred, and there were other signs that the brethren took no chances with the heretics they garnered. A sweet and lovely institution! The town is well worth a considerable stay; I am doing everything as prescribed by the French guide-book. The massive severity of the cathedral tower is a great relief to the eye after one’s surfeit of ornate architecture. Looking at it is like hearing a suite of Bach at the end of a programme of modern music.

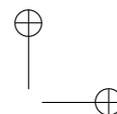
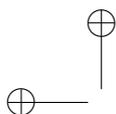




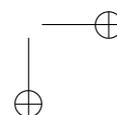
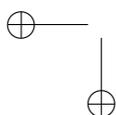
*7 May* – The French guide-book is commendably candid about the hideous devastation wrought in Portugal by its countrymen. I have never been able to see why one should take a grain of stock in the French Government’s perfervid protestations in behalf of their desire for peace. For my part, I do not believe a word of it, and never will until I see something that looks like a change of heart. Their record is against them. When I have heard anybody express a doubt of this, I have merely referred him to the standard guide-books of Western Europe. You can hardly turn ten pages of any of them without finding “sacked by the French,” “blown up by the French,” “burned by the French,” and so on. I am heartily with Andrew Jackson, who roared, “I know them French!” and did not believe for a single moment that the Ethiopian could change his skin overnight, or the leopard his spots. Whitlock cited that phrase of Jackson to me the other day as an example of the curious increment of force that bad grammar sometimes gives a sentence. “I know those French” does really seem not nearly so forceful.

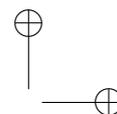
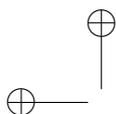
*8 May* – It is most interesting to be in Portugal at this transition-period. Evidently the younger people are taking hold of things – which is as it should be – under the leadership of the Finance Minister, Salazar, and are bent on modernizing the country, or, as one of them said to me the other day, “civilizing” it. Just at present, therefore, one is able to estimate pretty well their probable gains and losses. There is every likelihood, of course, that they will be so taken up with the accidents of civilization that they will lose sight of its substance as completely as other countries have done; but the interesting thing





is that they have not yet done so, and one can study the tendency in what is hardly more than its embryo stage. One would like to suggest that they take careful note of the experience of other countries that have gone some way over the same road, but I am not what Sam Weller called “one o’ the advice-gratis order,” so I shall leave all that to others, or else to go undone. Salazar appears to be a remarkable man; he is a professor of economics at Coimbra, and the youth of the land is enthusiastic about him. He is not a politician, did not put himself in the way of his job, or even want it; but having taken it purely *pro bono publico*, he works night and day at it in a disinterested, incorruptible and effective fashion, and he can do what he pleases because Portugal has now what they call a “presidential” form of government, no longer parliamentary – what we would call a dictatorship. As well as I can make out at present, the country carries two dictators, like the lady’s handkerchiefs, one for show and the other for blow. The president seems to be a quiet sensible man who leaves Salazar to work things out, and validates what he does. This is an extremely good arrangement; I shall look further into it. Such men as Salazar are very rare, and it is my notion that they can never make themselves effective in public life except under this condition of political absolutism. Portugal is certainly doing far better than any other country at the moment, paying its way, with only a trifle of external debt, and taking care of its unemployed by the expedients of a conscript army and an elaborate programme of public works, largely roads and ports. I have doubts of these; one can go at them too fast for one’s resources. It is unlikely that Portugal will, or can, ever get trade enough

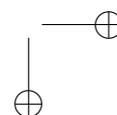
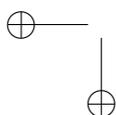


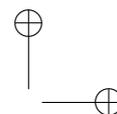
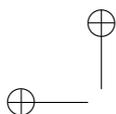


to require more ports or better than she already has. All these things have to be paid for out of production, and production can be overloaded, as it has been in all countries, until it becomes swaybacked under its burden of paper obligations.

*9 May* – There must be some counterfeiting here; people always ring the ten-scoot and five-scoot metal pieces, but take paper money without examining it. Portuguese cooks do great things with salt codfish; I hear they have twenty ways of cooking it, and all good. Certainly all I have had has been very good. Their codfish is the fine old rank kind that we used to have, but now never; sold whole, skin, bones, salt, dirt and all. I suppose it will disappear as the country becomes “civilized,” and the next generation will buy theirs flaked or fluffed, done up in cellophane, and tasteless as cotton. I do not envy them this, or the wine they will probably drink, or the tobacco they will smoke, and I am glad to have come in for one more taste of food and drink that may be deucedly unsanitary and dead against the rules of diet, but has not been sophisticated by chemists for profiteers. Speaking of tobacco, I notice that while Portuguese cigarettes are very fairly good, and one may smoke anywhere, apparently, except in museums and probably in churches, I never saw so little smoking done in public anywhere in the world. If you see a man smoking on the street, you remark it; at least, that has been my observation wherever I have been.

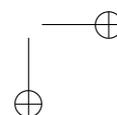
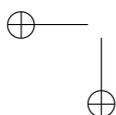
*10 May* – Sightseeing in the regular way, a tiresome business, but mostly profitable. One notices with plea-

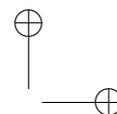
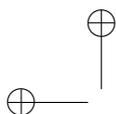




sure that the Portuguese Madonnas, both in painting and sculpture, are handsome, intelligent-looking women, with a great deal of dignity, dash and style. This is a vast relief from the Italian and Flemish conceptions of the Queen of Heaven. Looking at these last, I never felt that her intercessions for a sinner would get him very far, while if you had the Portuguese Madonna on your side, your cause would be well and competently managed. This notion reminds me of Charlie Beard's saying to me once – and I believe it is profoundly true – that if you approach God in a manly, self-respecting way, with simple dignity and some sense of humour, you are very likely to get what you come for; while if you crawl up to Him on your hands and knees, as a worm of the dust, He will probably listen to you for a while and then suddenly give you a ruinous kick behind. The Italians are called an essentially pagan people, but they seem instinctively to feel that God created them in His own image, and they approach Him accordingly, which is what I think Beard meant.

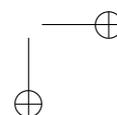
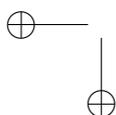
*11 May* – Someone sent me a clipping about Roosevelt's doings. All it suggested was Voltaire's saying that "government is a device for taking money out of one person's pocket and putting it into another's." The clipping mentioned three bankers who, it said, approved of the plan of "controlled inflation," whatever that is. I do not know the third banker, but I know the other two well enough to be sure without further evidence that if they approve of anything there is rascality in it somewhere. It is simply impossible for me to be interested in anything lying in the purview of American politics; yet as Whitlock said

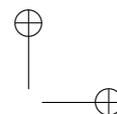
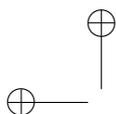




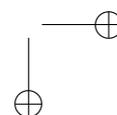
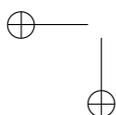
to me in Cannes the other day, and as Lincoln Steffens seems to have found out quite late in his career, the politician is a mere incident in the economic system of a country like ours. I learned this thirty years ago, and little as I think of the politician, I have never since then thought he had more than an instrumental responsibility for the evils he propagates. No one who really understands our country's history, I think, can see him in any other light. He is a sorry figure, driven by the demons of need, greed and vainglory into all kinds of despicable doings, a poor miserable fellow; I hope God will have mercy on his soul. It is those behind him, who maintain the economic system which calls him forth, who seem to me by far worse than he is, I submit, for instance, that if our recent experiences show how corrupt our politics have been, and are, they show also how much more corrupt, how thoroughly rotten, the whole structure of American business is, and how utterly flagitious are the principles of our economic life. What then can be said for our "representative" men of business, such as the fifty-seven, or whatever number it was, that Mr. Gerard named awhile ago as the real rulers of America?

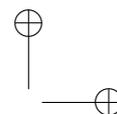
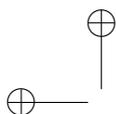
*12 May* – Many people in Portugal keep crickets, as the Chinese are said to do, in little cages, to hear them chirp. I saw some of these cages at Evora, on the house-walls, beside the windows. There is something pleasant about this, though with me the sound of a cricket is associated with the approach of winter, and it depresses my spirits somewhat. The Portuguese also name the days of the week as the Quakers do, Second Day, Third Day, etc., though they call Saturday the Sabbath and Sunday the





Lord's Day. I must ask how all this came about. As yet I have made hardly any inquiries about anything, but I am slowly putting together quite a list of questions. There seems to be enough water-power to make the country independent of any other kind – what is being done about it? Why is the littoral so depopulated and the fishing trade reduced; is it lack of refrigeration, or what? How is the land distributed, and on what terms is it held? These are a few of the things I should like to know. Another thing is, why so large an army on a peace-footing? One sees soldiers lounging everywhere, a most unpleasant sight, and yet there seems not the slightest chance of any use for an army. It reduces unemployment, I suppose; and again I have sometimes wondered whether England has put any pressure on Portugal to keep it up. Portugal is the third colonial Power, strange as it seems to us who think of her as a mere strip on the selvage edge of Spain, and she would be unable, of course, to keep her possessions a moment, especially the Azores and Madeira, except at England's pleasure, so in some respects she must do pretty well what England wants. This is what her status as "England's oldest ally" really means. It is interesting to reflect on the way France and England have kept to the character that Mr. Jefferson gave them, "the one a den of robbers, and the other of pirates." Portugal would seem to be notably easy-going with her colonies, not meddling much with their habits and customs, or over-pressing them to become "civilized" – a good policy, and apparently profitable. I heard it said in Lisbon that the United States would be very glad to have the Azores as a naval base; I wonder if there has

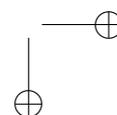
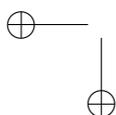


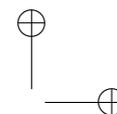
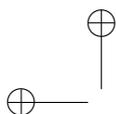


actually been any talk of that sort between the British Government and ours – I doubt it.

*13 May* – The beds here in even the best hotels are hard as Pharaoh’s heart, with a peculiar “dead” hardness, the like of which I never felt before. It keeps one shifting positions in one’s sleep, and one wakes up jaded and rusty. The bill of fare, too, is practically solid protein and starch, as in Germany. They think nothing of giving you fish, eggs, chicken and beef-steak at a meal – in fact, it is about the regular thing – with three kinds of starch, potatoes, rice and spaghetti or noodles, and a mouthful of some sort of vegetable. According to our doctrine, everybody ought to die at about forty-five, but apparently it is not so. I find myself doing pretty well on this diet, much better than in Germany, because the cooking is better. I remember Cassandre’s saying that the German bill of fare is evidence of how long it takes to overcome peasant-mindedness; it runs back to the time when the peasant’s ideal of life was to have meat twice a day.

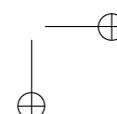
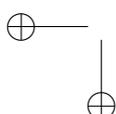
*14 May* – It is a pleasure to be on the roads almost anywhere here, because there is so little motor-traffic. This is one point where the experience of other countries, notably ours, might be valuable to the Portuguese. In a climate like this it would be possible to build roads that are good enough to serve every practical purpose, but not good enough to encourage aimless motoring. Something the same is true of railways. Portugal’s railways are pretty poor from a passenger’s point of view, and it is all very well to improve them, but not too much – it

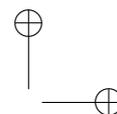
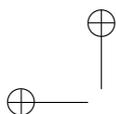




can be overdone. In fact, Portugal's studies of what other peoples have done to "civilize" themselves might well be mostly in the direction of the *ne quid nimis*. Artemus Ward said the trouble with Napoleon was that he tried to do too much, and did it; and that is just what all the "progressive" nations have done to bring themselves to their present cropper. They have done it in finance, commerce, industry, railroading, shipbuilding, hotel-keeping, everything. If I were one of this dictator's advisers, which thank the Lord I am not, I would suggest that he pore prayerfully over Artemus Ward's advice to Lincoln concerning his Secretary of War, who also made himself something of a dictator. "Tell E. Stanton that his honesty, patriotism and vigger merits all praise, but to keep his undergarments on. E. Stanton has appariently only one weakness, which is he can't allers keep his undergarments from flyin up over his head." No one can be in Portugal as a stranger for a week without discerning the most exquisite, delicate and beautiful human characteristics in such unfailing abundance and quick display as I believe he will no longer find elsewhere in the Western world. It strikes me that a dictator's first business should be to find out how far these have shown themselves compatible with "progress" in other countries, and to lay out his course accordingly.

*18 May* – A round of touring through Alcobaga, Batalha and Leiria, winding up at Coimbra. This is pretty nearly all of that sort of thing I shall do. Coimbra is probably the most interesting city in Portugal, and I shall stay here a day or two. A French paper gives a report of Roosevelt's speech on disarmament – merely the old line

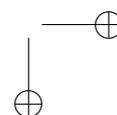
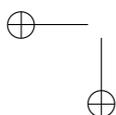


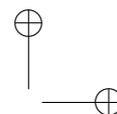
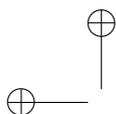


of sweetened wind over again that we have had for a dozen years. No one has the slightest idea of disarming, even to a degree, any more now than ever – in fact, less than ever, and all talk of it is pure buncombe. Everyone knows this, and no one has the decency to say so in unmeasured terms. What a crew, to be sure, are passing under the name of statesmen! – mere second-rate bunco-steerers. Give me Clémenceau, every time.

*20 May* – The university here at Coimbra is almost as old as the University of Salamanca. I never saw a finer-looking body of men than the students here. The guide-book says they have a long-established tradition of courtesy and good manners, and I can well believe it. They wear black trousers, a long black frock-coat with tails reaching to their knees, a black string tie, and a low-cut waistcoat, like a dinner-waistcoat. Over all this they wear a sleeveless black gown that falls to their ankles. Coimbra was the only university in Portugal, up to the revolution; there are others now. I suspect that they are in a way to overdo the “higher education” if they are not careful. The views around Coimbra are very lovely, and the city itself, like all Portuguese towns I have seen, has a superb situation; this seems to be a peculiarity of Portugal, and a charming one.

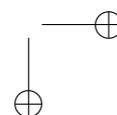
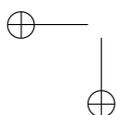
*21 May* – Bussaco, probably the finest thing of its kind in the world, though one has to be something of a botanist and tree-expert to take it in even measurably, and I am neither. The President of Portugal is here, recuperating, so there are military men and police about, and one or two whom I take to be plain-clothes men. There seems

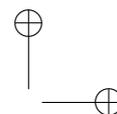
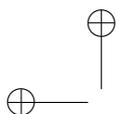




something very ignoble about this, as Julius Cæsar said. Somehow I can not imagine Thomas Jefferson going about under care of soldiers, strong-arm men and plug-uglies, even at the risk of his life.

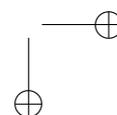
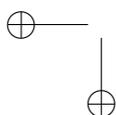
*25 May* – At Viana-do-Castelo, the most northerly town of Portugal, having come from Viseu and Aveiro. I have always been sniffy about the natural beauties of Europe as compared with ours, but the sight of Northern Portugal has done much to change my opinion. Certainly the railway-route from Viseu to Sarnada shows the most magnificent panorama that I have ever seen from a railway, and the trains run very slowly, so that one has plenty of time to enjoy it. Here at Viana, up on the hill at the hotel of Santa Luzia, the panorama of sea, hills, woods and towns is ahead of anything I know of its kind. There is soft water, soft as rainwater, in these granite regions, which is a great blessing; I never found soft water in Europe, except at Vichy – only fairly soft – and Gastein. I went to Viseu to see the paintings of Grao Vasco, the best in Portugal. His faces make it seem that he anticipated Old Breughel in realism; his sacred personages look like real live Portuguese people. One sees knotted ropes in the church's sculpture, symbolic of the country's maritime occupation. Perhaps some people were as much scandalized by this as some New Yorkers were, or pretended to be, by the dollar-marks, or whatever secular symbols it was that Cram put in St. Thomas's Church. I hardly think so, however; people in those days were too naive and straightforward to imagine anything out of the way in a little matter of that kind, also probably too unspoiled in their sense of

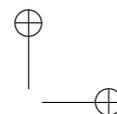
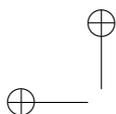




humour. There is a vast deal of fine humour in mediæval sculpture – on the portal of Moissac, for instance – and no doubt it was appreciated in all ages, except by a late Protestant precisianism which had to mask so much dreadful cussedness of its own under a sanctimonious sensitiveness.

*27 May* – Still lingering at Viana, with excursions in the glorious country roundabout. I can only say again that I never saw anything so fine. I wish I might stay longer, though one is greatly pestered by beggars. I am told that begging is prohibited in Portugal, but there is much of it done; not nearly so much as in Spain, however. I suppose the authorities hardly see, any more than Count Tolstoy did, how it is rightfully possible to forbid a person to ask something from another, and indeed I do not see how it is. These beggars, too, are miserable beings. Some have children to beg for them, which is bad. Begging is a prerogative of childhood, no doubt, but it ought not to be professionalized. I am told that these beggars would all be taken care of in good public institutions, if they would put themselves in the way of it, which evidently many do not wish to do; nor can one blame them for that. I shall be begging, in time, if I live into age, for I have nothing, and if I were in a warm country like this I believe I would rather roam the streets than go into an institution, however good. One would be freer in many ways. In a cold country the hardship would be too great. One notices that street-begging prevails more in warm countries than in cold ones, which seems to show that many feel as I do. What I can not quite understand is the prevalence of tuberculosis. There is a

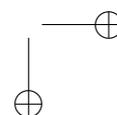
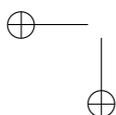


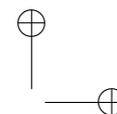
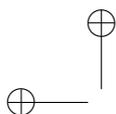


campaign on against it, and the propaganda-posters say there are 240,000 cases in Portugal (population about seven million) and that one person dies of it every fifteen minutes. With so much outdoor life in such a climate, one would say this must be an exaggeration; yet I have seen a remarkable number of consumptives, and heard them cough.

*28 May* – Many peasants, I think most of them, go barefoot. Their feet are hard as though made of horn, and have a great prehensile development, which enlarges the ball of the foot greatly. One sees how it was that the long slender foot has come to be accepted as the aristocratic type; like the overgrown finger-nail, it is evidence of freedom from toil.

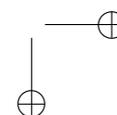
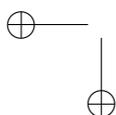
*29 May* – Several fine old colleges in Coimbra, formerly belonging to the Jesuits, have been converted into orphanages, poorhouses, etc. One feels a sentiment against this, as one would if the Oxford colleges were put to that kind of use in case the Established Church were rooted out of England. By all accounts the Jesuits were a bad lot here, and it was right to cut them adrift, but there is a measure of respect due to these slightly historical monuments much beyond what the Portuguese appear ever to have had. Now that “tourism” gives a show of some day being profitable, there is more attention being paid to these matters, as has happened in France, where the “tourist trade” converted the historical monument into a good revenue-producing asset.

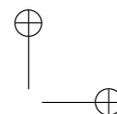
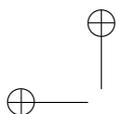




*30 May* – During a two-hour walk on a main road out of Coimbra I encountered only one motor-vehicle, a truck. I have not seen a single Ford tractor in Portugal; oxen, mules and donkeys still furnish the standard motive power. I notice groups of people mowing grain with sickles; I have not yet seen a scythe, either in use or on sale. How can people be so “unprogressive”? Well here they are, showing every sign of being not only reasonably well satisfied, but actually rather happy, which is much more than I can say for those I left behind me in the land of progress. How does one account for this? What is progress, and what is it for? Progress towards what, and why?

*31 May* – It seems odd to find the discovery of America still a living idea among these people. They seem to have an instinct for wide horizons.

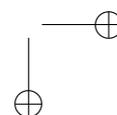
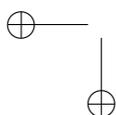


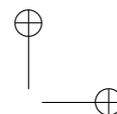
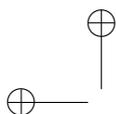


### 1933 June

*1 June* – In Lisbon again. I have been thinking of Huxley's strange dread of extinction. He said the thought that in 1900 he would know no more of what was going on than he did in 1800, was almost unbearable. "I would rather be in hell." But why should one care so much about knowing what is going on, especially when at best one can know so little of what is really going on? All we know is the appearance of things, as far as what is external to ourselves is concerned, and about all we actually do with our knowledge is, as the Greek philosopher said, to "take the appearance of things as the measure of their reality, and make a mess of it." There is much more hard good sense in Marcus Aurelius's view of the matter, that if we are extinct at death we shall have no sensation, and if we have a different kind of sensation, we shall not be dead but still living. For my own part, seeing what goes on, I think I could get on very well with knowing no more about it.

*2 June* – An English paper of last week says our private bankers, beginning with Morgan, are being "investigated"

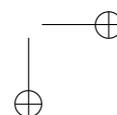
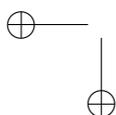


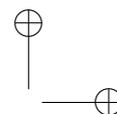
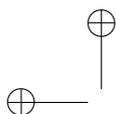


by the Senate, and that some prominent Democrats are already shown up as having been let in on the ground floor by Morgan in certain stock transactions. Woodin, Raskob and Baruch are mentioned by name as among them. I did not expect this to come quite so soon. My notion is that the investigation will now peter out pretty promptly. I remember how in the other Roosevelt's time, the insurance investigation, which made Hughes's political fortune, was carried on right up to the point of putting George Cortelyou and Cornelius Bliss on the witness-stand; and then it was suddenly and mysteriously wet-blanketed. I think the same thing will naturally happen now.

3 June – An uncommonly happy day, ending in a sense of appalling desolation and loneliness. It is strange how completely one's most familiar and intimate surroundings change character when one goes into them with the feeling of an alien, really an intruder – *advena, peregrinus et hospes*. The features of them which gave one the most pleasure and comfort suddenly become a source of uneasiness.

5 June – Mail from America gives news of public affairs there, a copy of Roosevelt's addresses to the moguls of the two conferences – the Disarmament Conference and the Economic Conference – and similar matters. None of it stirs me very profoundly. A couple of notes from Henry Mencken are more than worth the lot. In one of them he says, "The United States goes from bad to worse in a truly dizzy manner. Last week I came out with a public demand that Roosevelt be made king, but so far

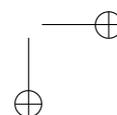
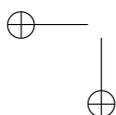


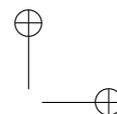
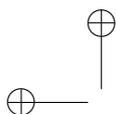


there has been little response. He is, to be sure, a fourth-rater, but even a fourth-rate king is better, it seems to me, than a fourth-rate President with his eye on 1936." Ten days later he wrote again, "The republic proceeds towards hell at a rapidly accelerating tempo. With the debt burden already crushing everyone, Roosevelt now proposes to relieve us by spending five or six billions more. I am advocating making him king in order that we may behead him in case he goes too far beyond the limits of the endurable. A President, it appears, can not be beheaded, but kings have been subjected to the operation from ancient times."

6 June – A life-size portrait of Cardinal de Polignac, in the Lisbon museum, interests me greatly, apart from its artistic merit, though this is considerable too, to the best of my inexpert opinion. I wandered in yesterday to look at it. It gives the look of a finely developed mind, which de Polignac had. I read his *Anti-Lucretius* when I was a youngster in college, mostly out of sheer love for his superb skill with the Latin hexameter, and I can repeat long passages of it from memory even now. Later I came to admire it as a polemic work. I used to own a fine copy, but old Professor Peters, of the University of Virginia, made off with it thirty years ago, and refused to give it back – as fine a case of broad-daylight open-air horse-stealing as anyone ever saw. He died a year or so afterward, and I never recovered the book. May the devil bless him!

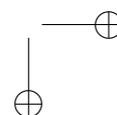
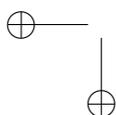
7 June – Thinking over my stay in the Minho, what a pleasure it is to travel in towns and villages where a

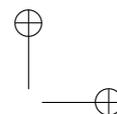
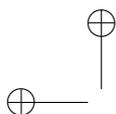




stranger is not yet regarded as “traffic” or “dusty.” I curse those words as applied to human beings; I resent having a crew of go-getting miscreants label me as “tourist traffic” and as part of the “tourist industry.” Even in Coimbra, the fourth city of Portugal, if a stranger stops in the street to look at something, he will draw a crowd – pleasant, kindly, no end ready to do anything for him, but simply curious. Everywhere, too, people wear their native dress, which is very striking, especially in the Alentejo and the Minho, with no self-conscious notion that they are helping out the tourist industry. They will soon change all this, probably, and be like the Dutch peasants of Volendam and Marken, professionalizing their clothes and customs; but at present they are unaware that their peculiarities can be exploited.

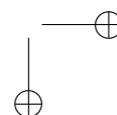
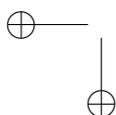
*8 June* – It has always struck me as strange that the art of painting has not flourished in the sunny regions of France, or in a country like this, as it did in Italy. I can think of only three painters who came from the south of France – there may have been more, of course – Fromentin from Rochelle, Ingres from Montauban, and Rigaud from Perpignan. I should think these lights and landscapes of Portugal would have bred a shoal of great painters, rather than the dull skies and flatlands of the Low Countries. Yet all Portuguese art of any quality runs back to the Flemish, and I have often wondered whether the Dutch and Flemish painters who visited Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did not teach more about painting than they learned. Certainly it does not appear that they learned a great deal.

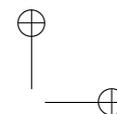
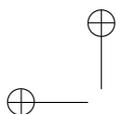




9 June – Overnight at Porto, on the way to Vidago, where I hope to find a pleasant place to stop awhile and write an overdue paper for *Scribner's* on Henry George. Porto seems an uninteresting place, not particularly attractive or pleasant; I have spent most of the afternoon looking it over, under directions from the French guide-book, and I have seen enough. It takes two days to reach Vidago from Lisbon; there is no through connexion until 1 July – summer schedule. Portuguese railroading shows queer anomalies, like the country generally. The fast train to Porto carries radio sets; yet when you check your baggage through, you label it with little slips of wood on which you scribble your name and address with a lead pencil, instead of card-labels. Also the roar of the train in passing over the tracks is so dreadful that it wears one's soul to shreds. I do not know whether this is due to the ballasting, or to the height of the trucks, or to what cause, but it is a mark of very ancient practice in railroading.

10 June – The scenic route from Regua to Vidago is fully up to the route between Viseu and Sarnada; truly, this is a noble country, and this ride is worth taking for the view alone. The narrow-gauge train crawls around the edge of tremendous declivities, hanging on by its eyebrows, and as I have no head for heights, it made me a bit dizzy now and then, though I imagine it is safe enough. One sees the same arrangement of grapevines on high trellises that one sees in the Minho; it is ancient Roman. The trellises are supported by beautiful slender granite posts about eight inches square and nine feet high. These posts strike one as a mark of great affluence,

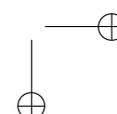
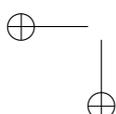


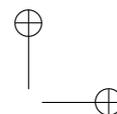
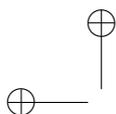


for one of them would cost real money at home, and they are here in any number, dozens more on each trellis than are really needed. Walls and houses are built in the Roman way, of huge blocks of dressed granite laid one on another with hardly any mortar, mostly with none. The boats on the Douro have the high prow and stern, curved and pointed, that one sees at Aveiro, suggesting a classical model; and the ox-carts are exactly the shape of a Roman chariot, even to the wheels. The wheels do not turn on the axle, but are solid with it, and the axle revolves in its bearings.

*11 June* – I saw in a fragment of a French paper that on some occasion lately they had succeeded in reproducing phonographically the voices of Ernest Renan and Marcelin Berthelot. It seems that at some time around 1880, Edison was over there with a model of his first phonograph, which made its record on a sheet of tin-foil wrapped on a cylinder. While he was showing it to Gustave Eiffel, Renan and Berthelot came in, and Edison recorded them; and in some way it was contrived to transfer the record to a modern disk. It is an interesting achievement, especially because those two men represent about the best that France has been able to do for herself, at least in modern times, and those who revere their memory will have something more than a sentimental interest in hearing their voices.

*12 June* – Another thing beside the use of granite that strikes a stranger as a sign of affluence is the use of cork. Beer-bottles have a heavy cork, with a cap over it. Cork and granite are the cheapest materials there are,



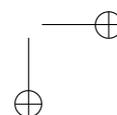
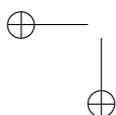


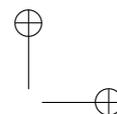
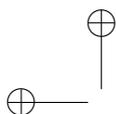
of course, but to one coming from a country where they are very dear, it seems the height of extravagance to use them in this free and easy way. Here in Vidago, for instance, one sees miserable dwellings, occupied by people absolutely lost in poverty and filth, built of magnificent huge granite blocks after the Roman fashion.

*13 June* – Portuguese folk-songs have a monotonous wailing sound; their compass is very small. I wonder why people who lay out their vineyards and terraces with such fine art do not show more artistic sense in other directions. The man-made features of one of these northern Portuguese landscapes is simply superb; yet the Portuguese seem satisfied with very rudimentary art in painting, sculpture and music, and from all I hear, in literature. They are poorly represented in all these forms of art.

*14 June* – The longer I am in this country, the more I am impressed by the beautiful spirit, the kindness and goodness that the people show towards strangers. No wonder they have an international reputation for that sort of thing; and the best of it all is that they do not know they have it, and so are not self-consciously living up to it. I have been among them a couple of months now, and have found them, without a single exception, the kindest people I have ever seen.

*15 June* – Working steadily at quite high pressure on my article for *Scribner's* on Henry George, so the days pass very quickly. I hope it will call attention to him, though I suppose nothing will do so effectively as long as Amer-

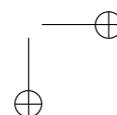
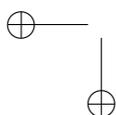


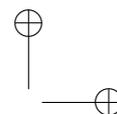
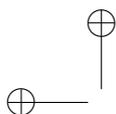


icans are what they are, or until tremendous hardship puts an end to their being drugged and doped by nostrums dealt out to them by demagogues and scoundrels. I go out and walk an hour or so every afternoon in the glorious sunshine – what a superb climate and what grand scenery! All the land here is irrigated. The water-wheels are of the primitive type seen on Japanese prints, worked by a couple of boys, like a treadmill. I saw people cutting grass with scythes today, the first scythes I have seen; they were of a primitive type, such as I never saw before. All the agriculture hereabouts is in splendid condition, and yet, as in Luxembourg, one seldom sees anybody at work on it – curious!

*16 June* – A woman who looked the part of a motherly New England matron hailed me today in good Massachusetts English, and it turned out that she was born on the Cape and raised in Boston. She married a Portuguese over there who afterward came into large properties around Vidago, so here she is, living in comfortable style in a new and pretty house on the edge of the village. Someone had told her that there was “a new coon in town” who spoke her language, and she set out to look me up. It seemed strange to be talking about New Bedford, Brockton, Province-town, Nantucket, so intimately with someone in these parts, for nothing could be more remote than our life in America; one can hardly convince oneself, while here, that it exists.

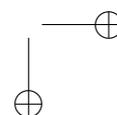
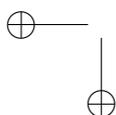
*17 June* – I have been idly wishing today that when I die I might find a resting-place in the cemetery at Port-Cros – that I might pass my last hours on that

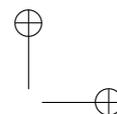
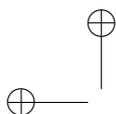




lovely island, alone with my recollections, not bothering anybody, with no care except what I could pay for, and that the last thing my eyes would rest on should be the beautiful little bay, with the sun going down over its mouth. But all this is pure vanity, for what does it matter, really? – the thing is only to live as well as one can while one lives, and think no further. “One grain of frankincense falls on the altar before another,” said Marcus Aurelius, “but it makes no difference.” My mind was set going this way by the news that Selma Kurz is dead, the greatest woman singer that I ever heard, and one of the most charming women I ever knew. It seems such a short while since she was a star protégée of Gustav Mahler, and I was haunting her around the Vienna opera. She was very beautiful and had every gift – voice, intelligence, distinction, emotional power. All the greatest singers of my day are dead – de Lucia some years ago, Edmond Clément and Battistini lately, and now Selma Kurz. Today I hear too that Hibben, the ex-president of Princeton, is dead. He may now be where he can talk things over with his cousin Paxton, but I have my doubts, especially if Paxton sees him coming. I think the first thing Paxton would ask him is whether he climbed over the gates of pearl or burrowed under them. A true gentleman was Paxton Hibben, of whom the world he lived in was not worthy.

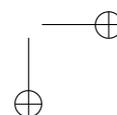
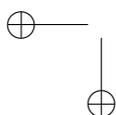
*18 June* – One is struck by the primitive type of tools used here. The axes have triangular heads and straight helves, the hoes have a straight blade, and the few scythes I have seen are straight. Still, they get results. Irrigating is done pretty much as in Egypt in Moses’ time, by

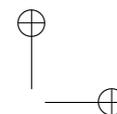
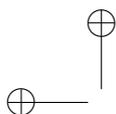




waterwheels, some horizontal, turned by oxen or donkeys, some vertical, turned by men. One would suppose a gasoline-engine would be cheaper, but I am told not. I have just seen a dozen men threshing grain with flails on a huge granite table-rock. I asked why the ox-cart's axles are never greased, and was told that the oxen seem to like the sound, for they will not pull unless they hear it. No doubt it is in some way associated in their minds with motion, but they can be educated out of that, apparently, for I have seen some pulling on greased axles perfectly well. These carts make a great noise; one can hear it almost a mile off, when the air is still. A gigantic Swiss whom I met in Bussaco, complaining of Portuguese backwardness, said, "They are still in the ox-cart stage with everything – hoo-*eesh*, hoo-*eesh*, hoo-*eesh*." His imitation of the sound was really capital.

*19 June* – Portuguese women smoke in their bedrooms, never outside the strictest privacy. To do otherwise is a mark of the *déclassée*, or worse, and one never sees it. They never enter the cafés. Yet a stranger may do either without attracting the least unfavourable attention. Some Portuguese women have begun to "come out" to a stage of emancipation that takes shape in civic-mindedness; they go in for what we used to call "social work." A prosperous engineer who is up here for the cure says his wife runs some sort of redemptorist organization for defective or abnormal children, and at the same time runs a household, doing well by both. Some also, I hear, are making a fair dab at the professions. Probably all this is a phase of "progress" that has to be put up with as inevitable; but if these ladies would look carefully

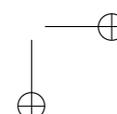
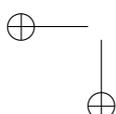


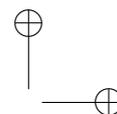
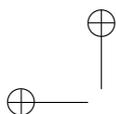


at the upshot of it in other countries, they might take thought how they could do better with their talents, if they have any that are really worth doing anything with. One of them told me that Portuguese women are very timid about stepping out of the traditional track. This, however, is a matter of money, which only economic independence will change, and in which I do not see that women differ from men. Our women were like that until so many of them grew rich, and most men anywhere are strong for conformity if they are not economically independent. One great reason why I am a single-taxer is because I see how the single-tax system would tend to stop this.

*20 June* – A large landed proprietor hereabouts who speaks English hunted me up today and took me over his premises most hospitably. He produces cork, olives, potatoes, and prodigious quantities of wine. Immense jars of beautiful clear olive oil, such as he showed me, look very opulent. He showed me some kirsch that he had made; I tasted it and found it excellent. His wife brought out a huge lot of medicinal dried herbs and roots, telling me what each was good for, and what you did with it. Their gentle enthusiasm made me think of Gogol's *Old-fashioned Farmers*, and I was charmed with it. They are much against the government, and I was glad to get their views to offset all the good things I have been hearing.

*21 June* – This is surely a queer sort of health-resort. Everything in and around the hotel is exceedingly clean and well managed, but the resort-property abuts on

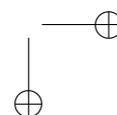
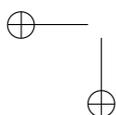


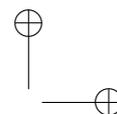
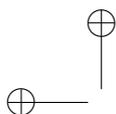


a village that reeks with horrible filth and breeds all manner of disease. No one seems concerned about this, or sees that it is as much a menace to visitors as it is to residents. The treatments are good, but while a patient is getting rid of his liver-trouble he may catch almost anything else, from tuberculosis or typhus down to the itch. If he escapes this, he can be driven out of his mind by the half-wild scavenger dogs that roam in packs after sundown, barking all night without intermission. No one notices this commotion either, apparently, which strikes me as most extraordinary.

*22 June* – I think that in any country a week or two in a resort like this gives one a better look-in on the nature and ways of one section of the population than one can get by any other means. Here it is almost like being marooned with thirty or forty people on a desert island. There is absolutely nothing in the way of organized amusement, not even a radio, so all hands are thrown on their own resources and are entirely off their guard. In the evening they sing folk-songs and dance peasant dances and play the children's games that seem to be common to almost all countries; all with the greatest gusto in the world. About a third of the lot play the piano with a remarkably good piano technique, but entirely by ear. I am told that hardly anybody in Portugal can read music, but many have a natural musical sense that enables them to play in this way very well.

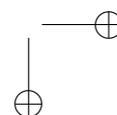
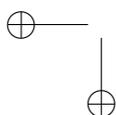
Some of the people here improvise in a striking fashion on the piano. I am told that the peasants also improvise verses for their songs, with a highly imaginative and poetic quality. This afternoon I saw half a dozen peasant

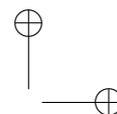
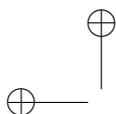




women reaping grain with sickles; every few minutes, without slackening work, they suddenly broke out into a wild and savage melody, with words which I was told were improvised and “very indecent.” I get all my information by way of extremely uncertain French, so I am not sure whether *vulgaire* means that they were indecent, or merely coarse and common, but I inferred the former. One song that the hotel-people sing oftenest has almost exactly the melody of the *Rachele, allor che Iddio*, in Halévy’s *Jewess* – the first four lines are precisely the same. I can not find out how the words run – none of the men here can stretch his French far enough to give me an idea of what they are about.

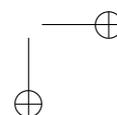
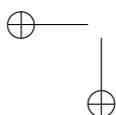
*23 June* – There is a great monotony about the European bill of fare, as compared with ours; in Portugal it is very marked. This extends to private houses as well as hotels and restaurants, apparently. When an American woman gets up something a little new, she makes a hit with it among her friends, if it is good. Here, however, there seems to be no great incentive to that sort of thing. It suits me very well, for my monogamous disposition covers food as well as nearly all else – novelty, as such, never attracted me; if I like anything I can eat it with pleasure day in and day out. But I can see plainly what a spoiled people we are, judging only by the commonplace matter of food and beds. The Portuguese will never get any more tourist trade from France or the Low Countries than they will from us, until they get in a different lot of beds. Only the Spanish will put up with the Portuguese kind. Even after you are enough used to them to sleep pretty well, you wake up lame, bruised and dreadfully

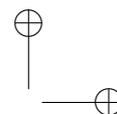
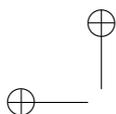




fatigued. Yet if you put a Portuguese in one of our beds, he would probably feel as stuffy as we would now on the feather beds of our ancestors. On a Portuguese bed, you dream that you are laid out on a marble slab in the morgue, with people coming in to identify you; and this is very wearing.

*24 June* – Another reminiscence of Gogol last night – his *St. John's Eve*. All day the village people collected twigs of eucalyptus, pine, rosemary, and whatever aromatic growth they could find, and all night kept bonfires going here and there, and jumping through the flames. This appeared to be all there was to the festivities, except a little dancing and a trifle of fireworks. There was no drunkenness, and I hear that there never is any drinking done on these occasions anywhere in Portugal. For anything I can see, the Portuguese are as temperate with liquor as the Southern French. The people usually sing more or less, but this year they did not; a local doctor told me they were in a sullen frame of mind, which I should think they might be, for they are in such a wretched condition. The dogs were excited by the goings-on, and kept up a dreadful din. All the dogs and cats I have seen in Portugal have been without exception miserable-looking, rangy, half-savage creatures, apparently homeless and ownerless; yet no one abuses them – quite the contrary. I have seen one or two toy-dogs towed on strings by women in Lisbon, but very few, and nothing anywhere that looked like a house-dog or a farm-dog. The oxen, sheep and goats, even in this poor province of Traz-os-Montes, are beautifully well-kept. The innumerable pigs



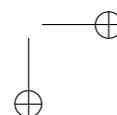
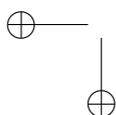


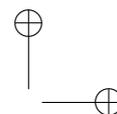
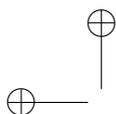
are of the razorback breed; they run free, so they are clean and seem to enjoy life immensely.

*25 June* – In a resort like this, it seems strange never to see a book. The light is too dim to read by in the evenings, but no one reads at any time; yet the people are all of a class that one would think might do a good deal of reading in these circumstances, even if it were for lack of any other occupation or pastime. I bought some candles the other day, and rigged them up in my room to help out the one electric bulb, so that I get a fairly decent light. Thus I have managed to do a little work of an evening, and also written some letters, but even this light is too poor to let me accomplish much.

*26 June* – I am done with Henry George, and shall leave here tomorrow. What a great man he was, and how well he managed to get himself misjudged and forgotten! I suppose *Scribner's* people will pull a long face over getting a really serious piece of work – I often think of that dreadful person, Bok, writing to Lyman Abbott for “a short, snappy life of Christ.” But the editors are right enough; they have to know their public. I am thoroughly convinced that our literature would become quite respectable if half our people, at the very least, were illiterate; I should put it, in fact, at three-quarters.

*27 June* – Dead tired, after the long journey to Braga, and nothing better than the soft side of a plank to sleep on, with a pillow which I find to be stuffed with millet-seed. I came directly up the hill to Bom-Jesus-do-Monte, where the best hotels are, and am in the best there is. A

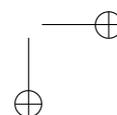
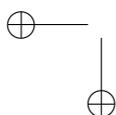


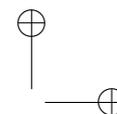
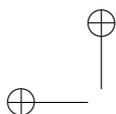


pleasant situation and superb view, but I am too fagged to enjoy it.

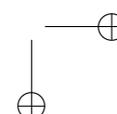
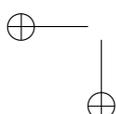
*28 June* – Scenically this region is worth all the praise it gets, and one is glad to be where the bulk of the people look a trifle less wretched than those I have been among lately. It is not so fine, to my eyes, as Vianado-Castelo, nor is the forest growth so variegated as at Bussaco, but one who has missed those places would do well to come here. I shall stay long enough to clean up some correspondence and other odds and ends that are in arrears, and then set out for Lisbon, aiming at passage to Rotterdam on the eleventh; possibly stopping overnight in Porto. I have learned a great deal in Portugal, and enjoyed it, but am very keen to get back to Brussels once more. Perhaps it is strange that Belgium is the only country, and Brussels the only city, where I have the sense of being wholly *at home*, and towards which, when I am away from it, I feel the nostalgia that one is supposed to feel for one's native land. I was never a good traveller, and now, having done so much of it, I would never willingly again travel except between Brussels and Luxembourg, or Brussels and Port-Cros.

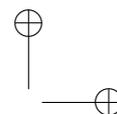
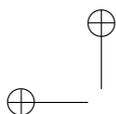
*29 June* – Having got through with St. John at Vidago, I came here just in time for the festival of St. Peter. The orphans' band of Braga played during the afternoon, extremely well; I was astonished to hear what they could do. In the evening a military band played. As at Coimbra, I noticed that the popular idea of celebrating was to stroll incessantly up and down – harmless and healthful, probably, but not very animating. There were very





good fireworks at midnight, not so elaborate as those at Coimbra, but quite pretty; they must have shown well down in town, at the foot of the hill. The Church had an eye to effect in planting its buildings as high up as they could get them – they rather lost out in countries like Holland, where there are no hills to speak of. This church of Bom-Jesus-do-Monte is a resort for pilgrimages, but I imagine the people are not doing as much in that line as formerly. I saw a woman coming up these three hundred or more steps, on her knees; I could not find out whether by way of penance or of getting some favour. If the latter, she must have wanted it badly; if the former, she must have been a pretty tough sinner. These steps have little terraces for the Stations of the Cross, with one or two extra chapels for good measure. The grounds around the church are lined with granite chapels, each one with some scene of the Passion made up of groups in wax, life-size. The figures are uncommonly fine and life-like, the poses excellent, and the faces really superb. Somehow I could not repress the thought of the miscellanyus moral wax statoots in Artemus Ward's Grate Show, though I tried to do so, for it was no doubt very wicked. Still, I doubt whether all good republicans realize how much warmth, and colour of life they lost when they put the Church under the civil ban. Seville in Holy Week, for instance, was very dismal. Republicanism is all very well, perhaps, but it seems to work out practically in an extremely dull and uninteresting existence; possibly not necessarily so, but actually it has, at least in modern times. Even prosaic England puts on a pretty decent show of its royalty every now and then, and the people

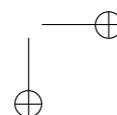
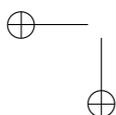


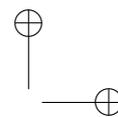
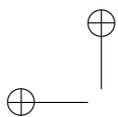


like it; and in Belgium the Church still puts a good deal of spectacular colour into life, which is very attractive.

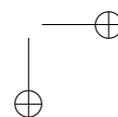
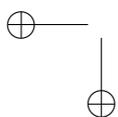
A very pleasant German woman is here with her two children, a Saxon from somewhere up Meissen way. I talked with her today; it was an uncommon pleasure to hear a free native speech in some sort of language that I could understand. She leaves tomorrow, I am sorry to say, for her home in Leixões, where she has lived many years. She is down on Hitler, and much depressed by the turn her people are taking, especially by the book-burning incident, which seemed to her, as it must to any well-ordered mind, a childish reversion to mere barbarism. She thinks that the ideals of the old free Germany are gone, and without ideals, she said, "all that is left of life is to eat, sleep and work, and if that is all, one might better be in one's grave." It struck me that the phrasing of that rather commonplace idea is fresher and more impressive in German, perhaps, than in any other tongue. I could have told her that life in the United States made me know much more about the value of an idealless collective existence than she does, but I did not want to add any weight to her despondency.

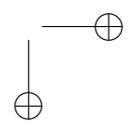
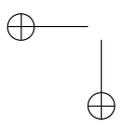
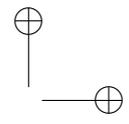
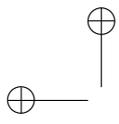
*30 June* – One sees a considerable blessing in illiteracy when one remarks the utter absence of signboards along the roadside. They hardly exist in Portugal; one may drive a hundred miles without seeing one. I do not think it would be unfair to say that the only advantage of our general literacy is that it enables people to read advertisements. Now that we have the radio, perhaps we shall not take so much stock in literacy, or air so

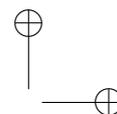
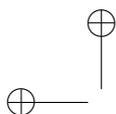




much bogus pride in having a literate public. It will be interesting to see whether this happens.



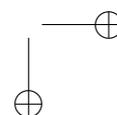
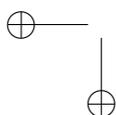


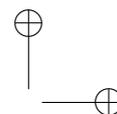
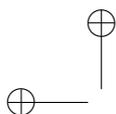


### 1933 July

*1 July* – The weather continues cold and overcast, as it has been for two weeks; some rain at intervals today, and heavy air, with a little thunder in the distance. Reports from Lisbon say it is uncommonly cool there also. I am very miserable under a run of hay fever, and can get no rest in these intolerable beds. If I hear favourably from Cook on Tuesday about my passage, I shall go down to Lisbon forthwith and spend the intervening time at Estoril. One can at least find something to read at Lisbon, and the dreadful railway-ride will be over. At any rate, I fancy I would pick up a bit if I were in motion, but this is probably only the *quo fit, Mæcenæ* – mere restlessness.

*3 July* – Portuguese honey is celebrated the world over; yet in all the time I have been here I have never tasted it nor seen any. One could make a generalization on this; in fact, the circumstance occurs to me only as a specimen of the material that I think most generalizations about a foreign people are made of. I remember that the first time I went to Italy, I was there all of two weeks

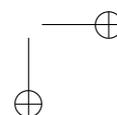
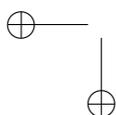


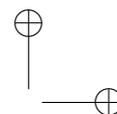
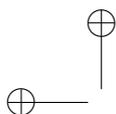


before I saw any spaghetti. Here I notice, too, that notwithstanding all the vegetables one sees growing, the hotels and restaurants seem never to serve any but string beans or spinach. I have remarked the same thing in France. The Portuguese raise tomatoes that are much like ours, and there is no vegetable that one can work up in more ways. Yet all I see them used for here is a garnish. Fruit, now, is another matter. The grandest fruit in the world is coming in, and the hotel tables are lavish with it.

*4 July* – Cook has arranged for me to go up by the Rotterdam Lloyd's *Slamat* on the eleventh. I shall get out of here tomorrow; the air is enervating, not at all like Viana's or Vidago's. There is an odd bird here, like a magpie, that is almost always seen in pairs. The Portuguese say it is a sign of bad luck to see a single one. I saw a pair today, so if there be anything in the idea, I shall probably miss accidents on the way to Lisbon.

*6 July* – Porto, as a guest of the Graham Company. I have walked over about twenty acres of winery, and been shown all the tricks of the port-wine industry, from grape to gullet. The processes are extremely delicate and intricate, and one can see why port is an expensive luxury. I sampled some of Graham's best assorted, God knows how old and precious, but it was wasted on me, I am sorry to say, for port and champagne are the two wines that I care nothing whatever for. I felt rather shabby about it, for my reception was so delightfully hospitable, but all I could do was to plead ignorance – which was quite truthful – to cover my lack of enthusiasm. This

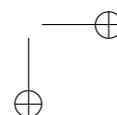
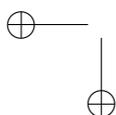


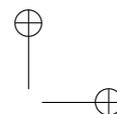
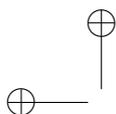


passed muster perfectly, for Mr. Graham said that the taste for port was almost always a cultivated taste. The trade expects the repeal of Prohibition within a year, but I do not. No one on this side of the Atlantic seems to be aware that Prohibition is a vested interest of great magnitude, and that it has never been anything else; a pure misnomer, meaning, in fact, only a sudden and violent redistribution of the profits of the liquor business.

*8 July* – Lisbon, late last evening. Now to get things together quietly, and go away. People think it is warm, but I do not feel it, whatever the thermometer may say. So much for the daytime, and the nights are fresh and chilly.

*9 July* – The Portuguese seem handy at nicknames. A high-class restaurant here, the Tavares, has a branch a block away, very good, but plain, and at low prices. This goes by the name of the Poor Tavares. One's first name is a good deal used, as it used to be (in the case of women) in our South. The hotel *portier* at Bom-Jesus called me Monsieur Albert, and I noticed that at Vidago the women were called Mme Olimpia, Mme Matilda, etc., on first acquaintance. One got a good cross-section of Portuguese society at those resorts. We had a few who were distinctly high-life, and the rest were upper and lower bourgeois, while outside were the peasants. One noticed great differences in the quality and style of jewelry worn, and still greater in the way of wearing it. Tradition is everything, when it comes to managing the amenities of life. A single generation can only begin to

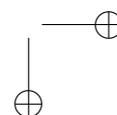
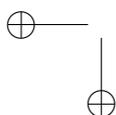


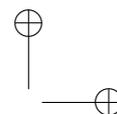
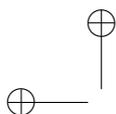


learn how to do it – even how to wear jewelry and have it look as though it belonged to them.

*10 July* – Yes, tradition is everything. I have just been surveying a crew of Canadian and English tourists off two cruise-ships that are touching here for a few hours. I never saw an unlovelier sight; our tourists are marvels of comeliness and mannerliness beside them. The steamship companies are keeping their heads above water by running cheap and short cruises from England down this way, and hence are carrying whole hordes of most dreadful riffraff. I am impressed again, as I have so often been, by the evidence that it takes at least three generations to learn how to look at a town or to examine a museum. I have seen Americans in Brussels and Amsterdam who made me think of nothing but Attila's invaders gazing at Rome with unseeing eyes. Wholesale indiscriminate travel is merely a levelling and vulgarizing influence. If the Portuguese encourage it, they will undermine their own distinctive good qualities past any hope of repair.

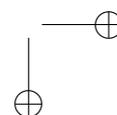
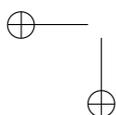
*11 July* – Aboard the *Slamat*. What a pleasure to be on a real true ship again, after the *Conte di Savoia*! We sailed at seven P.M., just the right time to see the beauty of Lisbon's situation at its best, reflecting a low strong sun. Very few passengers. The ship started full, but nearly all got off at Marseilles to save a week by going up overland. After a month on shipboard, it seems a natural thing to do. The remaining handful are young Dutchmen and their wives, on furlough from the colonial service – charming people. Two of the young women, especially, are as attractive, interesting and charming

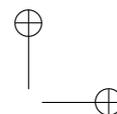
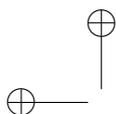




as any I ever saw. The crowd is now dancing in the salon, going through the same Dutch dance that I saw Mengelberg and Captain de Jong doing one night on the *Nieuw Amsterdam*. That fine old ship, gone now – sold to the Japanese for a troopship, I believe! When I first sailed on her, she was brand-new; Captain Stenger had her then, I think. She was always a grand sea-boat; I doubt her ever costing the company a dollar for tinkering. I sailed on almost her last trip, and on the very last trip of another grand sea-boat, the little *Rijndam*. With real ships like these giving way to the kind that are being put in service now, I think my sailing days should be about over.

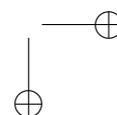
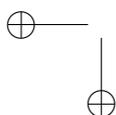
*12 July* – A day nearer Brussels, and my spirits correspondingly up. Writing to Cassandre today, I remarked how the monogamous disposition does one out of so many good things. There are several places on the globe where I could live very contentedly for some time if I were not always conscious that Belgium was waiting for me to wheel in under cover where I belong. The ship touches at London, and one may go ashore if one likes. Not I, unless and until I could go at the head of 300,000 men. *Insula inhospitabilis*, as Tacitus called it so truly, two thousand years ago! – or, as Mr. Jefferson called it, *humani generis hostis*, even better! Probably no one will ever be able to assess the evils that its civilization has brought upon the earth, for the worst and most contagious of them are among what Bismarck called the imponderabilia – an unpleasant thought. There is a greasy smooth sea on the Bay of Biscay, with a ground swell, and a soft stuffy air – soft and stinking. I pick myself up by chatting with the

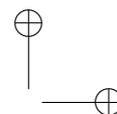
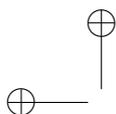




Dutch on board, but mostly by looking at one of their young women, who has just the earnest simple vivacity, the beauty, the charm of manner, that Henriette has. Henriette's Dutch blood has done a great deal for her beside giving her a taste for *Schiedam-Angostura*. Washington Irving has misled whole generations. We take our cue from him in thinking the Dutch are slow-witted, whereas their minds work about three times faster than those of other Europeans. Every Dutch passenger here has the exquisite smile that the nation ought to have copyright on. I never yet saw a single Dutch person, man or woman, handsome or ugly, who did not have it, and it is certainly the most prepossessing and disarming thing in the world. They have sense enough not to overwork it – in fact, they use it sparingly and with discrimination – but when they turn it on, down come your colours instantly.

*14 July* – News via London is that the dollar is dropping and the pound rising; also that Roosevelt is proceeding with his scheme of State-controlled industry. His idea of dealing with the economic situation is exactly like Lincoln's idea of homœopathy. I will bet on a rattling outbreak of strikes within a week's time. What a rare job-lot of human sculch Roosevelt sent to that economic conference in London, to go up against the most astute and unprincipled political scoundrels that could be sifted out of all Europe! I hear they are all going home now. About the only difference I can see between a Democratic and a Republican Administration is that a Democratic President fills up the State Department and the foreign service with near-imbeciles who are fairly honest, and

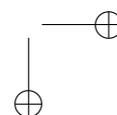
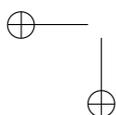


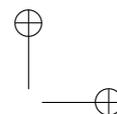
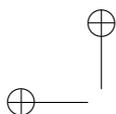


a Republican President fills them up with high-grade crooks. I got hold of a Paris *Temps*, which says rather oracularly, after an analysis of the situation, that Europe has nothing to worry about from Roosevelt's doings, and may regard them as negligible. That would appear to be about the size of it, I think.

*15 July* – Landed at Rotterdam at 8:30, out again at 9:54, and reached Brussels at 12:20. After being chivvied around by the Portuguese police, and filling out ridiculous questionnaires every time one stays overnight in a hotel, one hardly knows how to behave in a country that preserves some semblance of freedom. The customs people waved my luggage aside without any formalities, and as for passports, nobody even asked if I had one. What a delightful sensation it is to feel *at home*! I have not looked about much as yet, but as far as I have seen, things have not changed noticeably. The annual kermess is on, and the national holiday falls on Friday, so there will be a lively week-end.

*16 July* – The Monnaie is giving a summer season of operetta – delightful! I have missed the *Jolie Parfumeuse*, and the *Petit Faust* is on now, but *Giroflé-Girofla* comes next. I am hoping hard for the *Grande Duchesse*, the *Petit Duc* and the *Belle Hélène*. The performances are very elaborate, apparently, with special talent from outside, and Georges Lauwerijns is directing, so it will probably be just about what we used to see when I was a boy. The Monnaie does that sort of thing exceedingly well, as it does everything. I have heard *Madame Angot* and

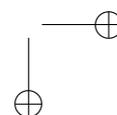
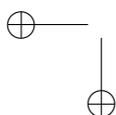


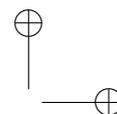
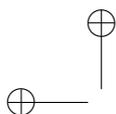


the *Basoche* in the regular season, and nothing could be better.

*17 July* – Business here is very dull, and times are fairly close. Apparently Holland's trade is in a bad way, too; I saw an immense amount of shipping tied up in Rotterdam as well as in Antwerp. It seems uncommonly hard for the human race to learn that war does not pay. Four years of expensive fighting, and then a dozen years of economic war, each nation trying to hold its own against every other nation. Still, when you look at the average individual, you see about what you can expect. All the nations are doing now is a series of efforts to stave off bankruptcy by all sorts of shifts, without touching the fundamentals of the situation. It will not work – perhaps for a while, but not for long. Best as it is, though, I think. If all hands went into liquidation now, and started afresh, they would do no better on a new deal; so it is probably better to keep going from bad to worse to worst, and then to bust. Six civilizations that we know of have done that, and nothing learned yet. I see that stock-market gambling has broken out again at home, quite as though nothing had happened. I also see an English estimate of our total national debt at twenty-two and a half billion dollars! Well, there you are!

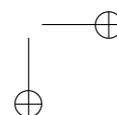
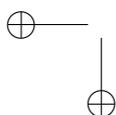
*18 July* – Five concerts in the Grand' Place these evenings, by amateur musical associations, of which there are more in Brussels than there are black cats. This self-contained little country is full of music, as it has always been, ever since its people taught music to the whole of Europe. Curious, that they have never got credit for this – proba-

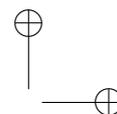
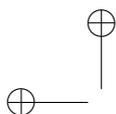




bly because they never put on airs about it or advertised themselves before the world. In America, for instance, we think of Germany or Italy as the natural home of music, but Belgium taught them both; and today Belgium does more with music than either, and does it better. At the concert I heard last night, for instance, there was all the discipline, clearness and accuracy of a German performance, and in addition there was *style*, superb style, which Belgians seem able to put into anything that they undertake to do. In this country even the horses have style; and as for the cats, they live, move and have their being in the grand style. The Belgian sense of style comes out especially strong in their pageantry. They put on an open-air mass in the Grand' Place yesterday noon, when there was a distribution of prizes or awards of one kind or another, among a lot of societies that run clear back to the Middle Ages. It was a gorgeous sight, and superbly stage-managed. Now that this sort of thing has disappeared from Spain, perhaps people who wish to study pageantry will come here. If they do, they will get a surprise. I have often wondered why Belgian proficiency in the fine arts is so little known among us – why, for instance, American students of music should go to any other country in Europe to study. Probably it is because the Belgians are so indifferent to self-advertising.

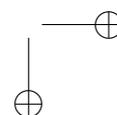
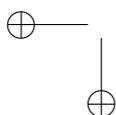
*19 July* – The *Petit Faust* last night made every superlative in the language as feeble as dishwater. It was a grand performance, elaborate, spirited, and immensely funny. I laughed until I simply laughed myself out of breath and muscle. One hopes that Gounod had a good sense of humour. Hervé had better taste than Pepusch, however,

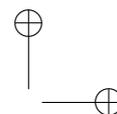
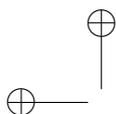




who cribbed the march from *Rinaldo* for his highwaymen in the *Beggar's Opera*; Handel had reason to feel a little sore about that. Hervé put in only two reminiscences of Gounod's music, each no more than a bar, but he surely put them where they would do the most good. I dare say that this run of the *Petit Faust* is not only the best ever given, but the best that ever will be given; I can not imagine a better. The Monnaie was bung-full, and the audience knew all the inside play of the opera as well as a Kansas Prohibitionist knows the technique of a blind tiger. One saw again that a great reason, perhaps the greatest reason, for the excellence of music in Belgium is found in the quality of the audiences. Transport the Monnaie bodily to Paris, for instance, and I doubt if one would get anything like so fine a performance. On the other hand, bring artists here from outside, and they will play better than they can, as I have often heard them do.

20 July – On the evidence to date, I did Roosevelt an injustice in thinking he would be easy for the British to manage. They had such easy going with that curious kindergarten that he sent over to the Economic Conference, that they evidently thought they had another Woodrow Wilson to deal with, and they were taken in, which gave me a lot of satisfaction. The scheme was, of course, to peg the pound under the dollar, and so give the British an advantage in international trade. It fell through, and now the Anglophiles on both sides of the ocean are raising loud cries of pain. Economic nationalism is certainly played out, but our bogus statesmen have not discovered it yet, or pretend they have not,

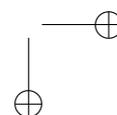
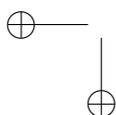


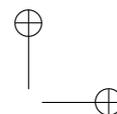
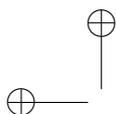


and meanwhile one hates to see an American President ingloriously taken in.

*21 July* – I have been reading an excellent story in the Tauchnitz series, by Margery Allingham, whom I never heard of. It has the commonplace title of *Police at the Funeral*. It put me in mind of the great trouble with book-notices in our country, which is that those who write them have no idea whatever of the classification of books into first-rate, second, third, and fourth-rate, or of what makes them so. They also have no idea that a fourth-rate book may sometimes be exceedingly good, and well worth reading – or again, of what makes it so. Hence they are always giving one kind of book the order of praise that properly belongs to another, and thus doing their best to lead readers astray. This book that I speak of is a fine example of a third-rate book that is extremely well done, and that one could recommend to anybody for an evening's very pleasant reading. The point is that the writer took her humble job seriously and disinterestedly, trying to make as much of it as could be made, with as much conscientious literary workmanship as could be displayed within the limitations of her task; and that she was notably successful and deserves cordial praise for her success.

*22 July* – All this disgusting humbug about money! It would be as easy to devise an international currency as to devise postage-stamps, were it not for the element of speculation. At present, money is not only a medium of exchange; it is also a commodity, like pork, which a crew of swindling scoundrels can gamble with; and naturally,

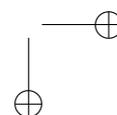
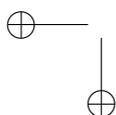


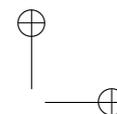
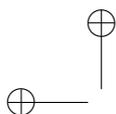


governments will not do anything to divest it of this latter character.

*23 July* – The wretched state of things in Germany continues. It is a manifestation of a nation-wide sentiment that any honest-minded person must sympathize with, but its expression, under the direction of a lunatic adventurer, takes shape in the most revolting enormities. Such a series of circumstances as have existed in Germany for fifteen years always bring this type of individual to the fore. What Mr. Jefferson called the “homicide alliance” against the French revolutionary movement neatly paved the way for Napoleon, and the Versailles Treaty has now brought out Hitler. The London *Times* is publishing some extracts from Hitler’s book, which reveal him as an unbalanced monomaniac. I think the big industrial interests of Germany took him on in the first instance as a handy tool, but he got the bit in his teeth on the strength of his popular following. I wonder what his relations with them are now, and what they think of him.

*24 July* – I see Roosevelt is getting up a “drive” on employers, Liberty-loan fashion, to raise production-costs by State-managed wages and hours. It seems the last desperate expedient of half-baked economics, attempted by methods which to a grown-up person are utterly revolting – badges, slogans, posters, three-minute men, etc. It puts me in mind once more of the poor artist who killed himself a year or so ago, leaving his testimony in a letter, that the United States is a nation of children and morons, governed by scoundrels. I wonder how

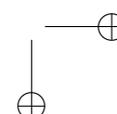
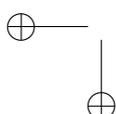


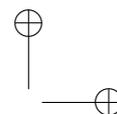
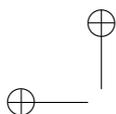


many employers there are who have the money, credit or business prospects to enable them to sign on Mr. Roosevelt's dotted line. He may discover that the only cure for the evils and disasters of his Stateism is more Stateism of a stronger type, in which case Bro. Stalin may permit himself the luxury of a hearty laugh. Once again one thinks of Mr. Jefferson's excellent wisdom in saying that if we must wait for Washington to tell us when to sow and when to reap, we shall soon want bread.

*25 July* – All my life I have been bothered by the wretched disability of taking *omne ignotum pro magnifico* in many petty matters. If I have a valise to pack or a train to catch, the thought of it weighs on me unduly, and any sort of job looks harder to me from the outset than it really is, even though it be something I am quite used to doing. I do not notice, however, that this tendency strengthens with age – rather the other way, in fact. Still, one must keep an eye on it; yet not so much, I think, as on impatience and bad temper.

*26 July* – A letter from Dr. Bell, forwarded via Lisbon. He is out of the headship of St. Stephen's College, having been scandalously treated there, and says he has as yet no plans or prospects for the future, which is a competent comment on the character of our institutional life. Still, there is no inducement to take a position in one of our colleges; one can do nothing as long as the fundamental condition persists. Barnard, the old president of Columbia in the days when Columbia was a real school and produced real men, put it exactly when he asked a silly mother what she thought was the use of

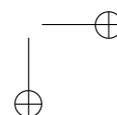
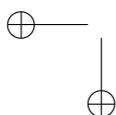


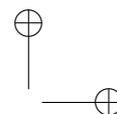
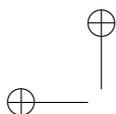


wasting a \$3000 education on a three-dollar boy. This point has to be settled before anything worth doing can be done; and it will not be settled or even seriously discussed.

*27 July* – Exceedingly hot and close. I went to Tervueren on the chance of better air – no use. While my friends played golf I wandered off to lie on the grass. Two street-girls near me, in a deep discussion of the deeds of Judas Iscariot, and what his real idea was. Curious! One was a tall, handsome Flemish girl, very attractive and interesting, but with big hands and feet, which is unusual for a Belgian. I liked her kindly manner. E. S. Nadal called attention to the fact that very tall women are so regularly kind and gentle-spirited, and ever since I picked up the idea from him I have kept count, without meeting a single exception. I thought of striking up a talk with these girls, but when I heard what they were doing with this strange subject, I was more interested in eavesdropping. They talked remarkably well and intelligently for perhaps twenty minutes, then stretched out flat and went to sleep instantly, like a pair of puppies.

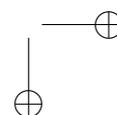
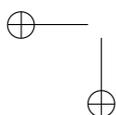
*28 July* – Now that the Stielen has gone, the Taverne Royale is the most interesting restaurant in Brussels. I dropped in there today and got a grand welcome, and I unexpectedly found an old friend in a waiter who used to look after me at the Stielen – what a delightful place it was! There was a fine freemasonry among the guests, also between the guests and the waiters, and there was always a current of ideas going – the place bred them. One could talk well there. The Régence in Paris has a

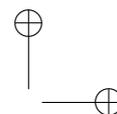
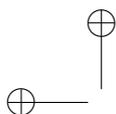




little the same sort of tradition. It will be a pity if the Royale ever changes its arrangement and fittings; the best place there is on the little gallery, two or three steps up from the café. A fine old lady was eating there today, and having a grand time with the waiters. It takes a good many years for a place to develop this character genuinely, and how one hates the imitations of it that exist everywhere in the restaurants and steamships and hotels that advertise their “clublike atmosphere”! Think of pretending to create out of hand the sense of intimacy that can only develop gradually out of the associated sensibilities of well-bred people! It is significant, I think, that vulgarians pay so much of this sort of tribute to the real thing which is now so seldom found.

*29 July* – *Scribner’s* people seem satisfied with my piece on Henry George, and say it will come out in November, so I suppose all the single-taxers in the country will curse me afresh. George was ruined, really, by his republican convictions. He thought it was his duty to spread the light. It is hard to account for this instinct being uppermost in so great a mind – for George was one of the very few first-rate minds of the century. If any considerable section of human society is ripe for George’s doctrine 50,000 years hence, it will be doing very well indeed, and one would think he should have known it. Still, he was an American, and we seem to have the instinct born in our blood to crusade for an idea, once we get one. One thinks of the old jingle; was it Porson’s? – I have forgotten –

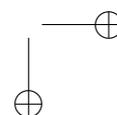
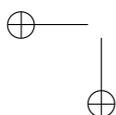


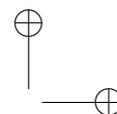
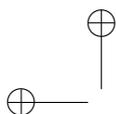


The Germans in Greek are sadly to seek,  
Not five in fivescore, but ninety-five more;  
All, save only Herrmann – and Herrmann's a German!

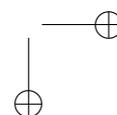
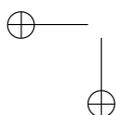
*30 July* – Now that Yale has set up an Institute of Human Relations – think of it, dear Lord! – it would be rather amusing if one of our colleges should set up a professorship of the Fine Art of Living. This might be a likely move for the new president of Harvard, since a new president has to look around for something sensational to show that he has the right idea of his job. Such a chair would not amount to anything in a practical way, but that would be no objection to it, for so few of them do, and one could have a good deal of fun with one's lectures – no end of fun. If I were not so lazy I think I would write up a set of lectures purporting to come from such a chair, and publish it as a sort of extravaganza.

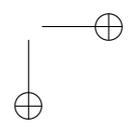
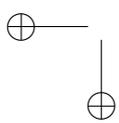
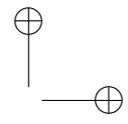
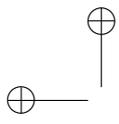
*31 July* – At the Monnaie last night to hear *Giroflé-Girofla* – again a grand performance. I doubt if these operettas were ever put on so elaborately anywhere, or done so well. Offenbach's *Vie Parisienne* comes next. It is pleasant to see something on the stage that is not a piece cut out of one's own everyday life. The masses must think enormously well of the very ugly and prosaic world that they have created, since they insist on having it served up to them even in literature and drama; but it is no doubt the only kind of world they know or ever dream of. I noticed again last night how charming the little Place de la Monnaie is when it is animated by the crowd leaving the opera. Truly I think Brussels is the

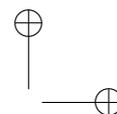
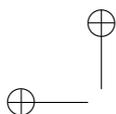




most delightful place in the world; but one has to live here to perceive it – there is really almost nothing to attract the casual passer-by. I have been an opera-goer for many years, from Naples to Petersburg and from London to Vienna; but my happiest associations with the opera are here. My most charming recollection is of coming out from Offenbach's *Hoffmann* with Cassandre, and after a sandwich at the Trois Suisses, strolling down through the rue du Midi and the Place Rouppe to her residence. Brussels seems to specialize in the charm it throws over such simple delights. I remember how Mme Bakkers, of the Opéra-Comique, almost wept when she told me about her days as a student here, and how she used to go over to the rue des Bouchers after the opera and eat *moules-frites*. I think she came near kissing me when I gave her full change for her reminiscences, and I wish she had, for she was a lovely woman and a beautiful unpretentious little artist. Hers was the only case I ever knew of incurable stage-fright destroying a career. She fought it for three years, and then broke down. She was so adorable in the *Noces de Jeannette*. How many great artists the Monnaie has bred, in its time, and sent out all over the world! The Elector Max-Emmanuel laid the foundations of a great and impressive history when he established that house in the year 1700.



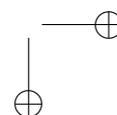
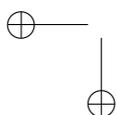


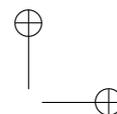
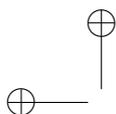


### 1933 August

*2 August* – The English papers advertise an amazing number of cheap and short cruises. I hear that the steamship companies are keeping out of bankruptcy in this way. There are no English tourists here; only one stray party has turned up in my view – and such people! It was a replica of what I saw dumped into Lisbon once or twice. Evidently this style of travel is kept up by people who never travelled before. It is the depression, doubtless – having nothing to do at home, and no income, they go travelling. This kind of thing may save the shipping companies, but it will ruin the morale of the service, and vulgarize every town it touches. Holland has always been of two minds about the value of the “tourist traffic,” I am glad to say, and so to a great extent has Belgium; both countries have kept it pretty sharply segregated, and neither has lost much character by it.

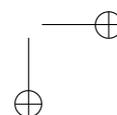
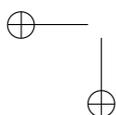
*3 August* – Roosevelt deserves credit for breaking up that egregious bull market, as well as for his attitude towards England’s scheme for stabilization. That flurry of speculation simply showed how incorrigible we are,

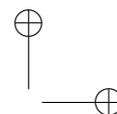
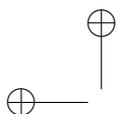




and how incapable of learning anything. But I do not see how Roosevelt's scheme for "recovery" will help matters, or do anything but make a lot of trouble. My idea is that what recovery has taken place is purely natural. The depression has, I think, followed the classic cycle, lasting about three-and-a-half years, and then beginning to lighten; and Roosevelt came in about the right time to get the advantage of the turn. Now that fear has subsided and self-interest is asserting itself, as it seems to be doing, I think he is in for a mess, for his economics are superficial and half-baked, and the country will soon discover that they are. It stands to reason that anyone who will listen to such advisers as he has picked out will get into trouble, and deserves to. The English papers are very well-mannered in their comment, with that particular caution which they always display when they think they have a sure thing; saying just enough to keep themselves in a position where, when the time comes, they can pounce down like tigers. The French papers seem to have given Roosevelt up; they regard him, when they look at him at all, much as the farmer regarded the camel. They think that the Continent will be little affected, whatever he does, and I believe they are right.

*4 August* – It is dreadfully discouraging to realize how much one has to know in order really to see or hear anything. I thought the other night how little a person who did not know all the "inside play" of Gounod's *Faust* could appreciate the *Petit Faust*. I wonder how many strangers who look at the Grand' Place here in Brussels really see what they look at. In fact, it was passing through there today that set me thinking on this point;

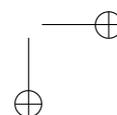
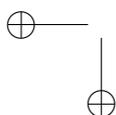


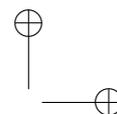
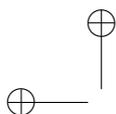


I felt so ashamed and retarded on account of knowing so little in the face of all that is to be seen there. I am not sure that many people I know would feel the charm of Port-Cros if they went there; they would be struck by its natural beauty, perhaps, but not its romantic charm. I remember the Englishman I met there saying that many people who visited the island saw very little to interest them.

*6 August* – The correspondence column in the *London Times* interests me as much as any other feature of the paper. It has value as a document. When the historian searches our period for the “substratum of right thinking and well-doing” which he knows must have existed somewhere, he is going to have a devil of a time finding it, and these letters will be an immense help to him. There is a great correspondence going on now over the behaviour of stoats, and every day one reads letters that have to do with the ways of bees and flowers, peculiarities of dialect – I even notice one on children’s fancy for making mud-pies and there has been one running for six weeks on the game of knucklebones. It is interest in such things that determines the quality of a civilization, and not the kind of interest one finds reflected in front-page news.

*7 August* – Reports of great heat everywhere in Europe. It is warm here, but nothing to make a fuss about. I notice that the thermometer-readings seem inconsistent with the amount of suffering reported. A New Yorker would not think a temperature of 86° was much out of



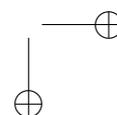
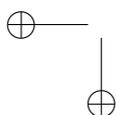


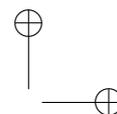
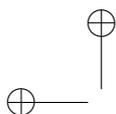
the common, but it seems to raise a great commotion in England.

*8 August* – It is remarkable how sound some of our earlier writers were on the history of government and the relation of economics to politics. When one gets through with John Taylor, of Caroline County, there is really not much left to read; and then how easy it is to understand all that is going on at home, in Germany, England, everywhere. No wonder Taylor is long out of print; a sound economist, which Mr. Jefferson, except by instinct, never was.

*9 August* – I have been writing pretty steadily here, as I did at Vidago, and I notice that the daylight is much easier to write by than the high light of Portugal or the South of France. This leads me to think I have perhaps been wasting some sympathy on the old Flemish and Dutch artists. Maybe it is easier to get a right impression of colour and form by this low light, and easier to transfer it to canvas. I took the opposite so completely for granted that I never asked an artist about it, and now quite possibly the joke is on me.

*10 August* – Think of it! – only a year ago we were getting all our German news filtered through interested interpreters, and nothing could be more egregiously misleading. I told several people that it was all very well, but I would like to hear a few words from Hitler and Hugenberg. Well, believe me, we are hearing them. What newspapers! Once more I wonder what a nation gains by literacy, if ours is a fair specimen. I hear today that the

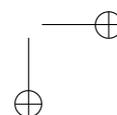
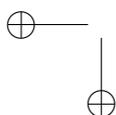


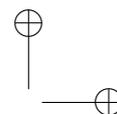
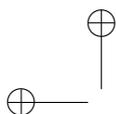


only newspaper that is dealing in the least intelligently with Roosevelt's scheme is the Baltimore *Sun*; all the others, I am told, are merely driveling.

*11 August* – One great improvement here in Brussels is the rearrangement of the Royal Museum. A lot of trash has been taken out, and the remainder hung properly. Another improvement is that locomotives do not blow their screeching whistles when they start a train. That practice was senseless and a great nuisance; I can not imagine how it originated. I hope the French railways will reform; their whistling is barbarous. Three of the most distressing sounds in the world are those made by French locomotive-whistles, French motor-horns and French dramatic sopranos. Many Portuguese women in rapid conversation, I noticed, have a rather fascinating and peculiar way of letting their voice break on a high note. I quite liked it, as somewhat tempering the harshness of the language. I also greatly liked a little throaty chuckle that I often heard from them.

*12 August* – Slave-mindedness is the hateful thing, whether it follows Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt, Mussolini – what matter? Is not the mass-leader, too, the most slave-minded of all? The French revolutionist's saying, "I *must* follow the mob, because I lead them," ought to be embroidered on every national flag, it strikes me. How right Huxley was about what he called the coach-dog theory of political leadership, i.e., that a leader's duty is to look sharp for which way the social coach is going, and then run in front of it and bark.

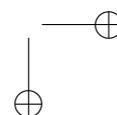
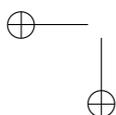


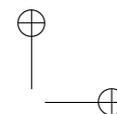
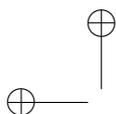


*13 August* – I notice that the German university students' association has made a statement that they have had enough "civilization" now – railways, electric light, etc. – and demand a return to Goethe and the old German "culture." It is delightful to see this distinction drawn. I wonder how much of that sort of spirit exists underneath the amazing and dreadful surface-aspect of German public affairs. Perhaps enough to be the saving thing in the long-run; I hope so, and am trying my best to believe so. Perhaps Heine's faith will be justified, yet at the moment it is hard to see how.

*14 August* – After a long period of cautious and dispassionate watchful waiting, the London *Times* today turns loose some sharp language from its American correspondent concerning Roosevelt's scheme of industrial control. It says the economic thought expressed in the recovery-drive is "little short of weird." It speaks also of "obvious economic absurdities," and remarks that in some ways the campaign is "turning slightly hysterical"; also that certain members of the "Brain Trust" are known to favour "queer currency and other economic oddities." This looks as if the *Times* thinks the game is about up, and that it can risk being as savage as it likes; and if so, I believe it is right. The confiscation of "national psychology" is all very well, but there are certain situations that can not be straightened out by wind-power alone, nor can the incidence of economic laws be deflected by it.

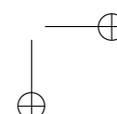
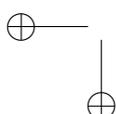
*15 August* – Words fail me when I think of the production of the *Vie Parisienne* at the Monnaie last night. I verily believe there never was one like it, and perhaps will never

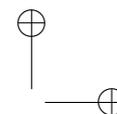
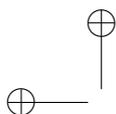




be again; and the house was jammed, with many people turned away, as happens every night. How well it speaks for the civilization of this people that this should be so, with conditions as they are! One wonders how anyone could listen to the music of the *Vie Parisienne*, however indifferently done, without being aware that Offenbach was a really great musician. Yet I believe he never got the reputation he deserved until *Hoffmann* was put on, and he was then dead, poor fellow! Still, it seems he had a very pleasant life, which is more than most great musicians have had, and his operettas reflect it. What a pleasure it is to see and hear something really gay, with no pitiful imitation of gaiety!

*16 August* – The confiscation of public sentiment, which seems so easy in America, would be impossible here. Let the government come out with a ringing declaration that “the franc is the franc and will always be the franc,” the Belgian merely closes one eye and says to himself that it looks like a dam’ good time for him to send his money out of the country. The Belgian has no illusions whatever about the character of his government. For all my knowledge of our people, though, it still amazes me that they will tolerate being talked to as if they were a crew of longshoremen by that vulgar ruffian Johnson, Roosevelt’s strong-arm man. I suppose it is really the only sort of language they understand; it must be so, indeed, or it would not be used. I would like to see somebody try that on these people here; he would never have a second chance.

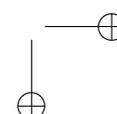
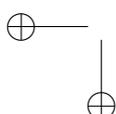


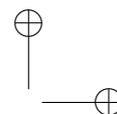
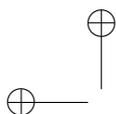


*17 August* – Over at Louvain today, calling on Mlle L., a charming woman of about fifty, I should say, living in a magnificent house three hundred years old, surrounded by the evidence of many generations of high culture. I thought again of Father Benson's theory of ghostly apparitions as due to a sort of rubbing-off of human personality on one's physical surroundings. Duplicate the L. property in every detail, and the impression on a person entering would be wholly different, I am sure. There is something in the spiritual seasoning that comes of steady exposure to generations of cultured occupancy. Mlle L. speaks Flemish with a lisp, which is very fascinating. I could never make out why certain physical defects interest me; a lisp is one of them. I once knew a very pretty girl who had one blue eye and one brown eye, and I wasted a great deal of time following her about, although she was quite uninteresting aside from her looks.

*18 August* – No doubt I was wrong about this light being hard for painters. I crossed the Grand' Place at about half-past six under a dull and heavy sky. The masses of flowers in the flower-market stood out with a much more rich and brilliant colour than they would have had in the high light of Portugal, and the detail of the buildings was more explicit. Now that I think of it, painters have told me that the early morning and late afternoon hours were best for outdoor light.

*19 August* – A certain sign that autumn is coming on; the Luxembourg restaurant put on pig's knuckle and sauerkraut for the first time today. Next Saturday they begin with their fine *soupe Ardennaise*. The Belgian has

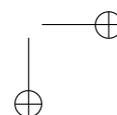
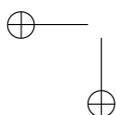


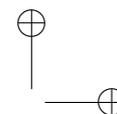
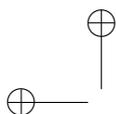


to make the most of what summer he gets, there is so little of it; and the German, over in the Mosel valley, seems to get even less,

*20 August* – When all is said, slave-mindedness is the despicable thing. I don't see that it makes much difference who or what is followed; one follows Hitler, another follows Roosevelt, Stalin, Mussolini – what of it? It is the spirit in which one follows, that counts. America has coined a good word for it, the “yesman,” and having so much of the reality, ought to take copyright on the term. There is less of it in England and France than elsewhere, except here in the Low Countries; France got most of hers out of her system in Napoleon's time.

*21 August* – I would not be afraid to bet all I have that Hitler's Jew-baiting, book-burning, etc., is a string of red herrings drawn across the trail of his surrender to the industrialists and landed proprietors. He may have reconciled his more turbulent followers to this surrender, but though I know nothing about it, I have my doubts. Certainly his Socialism seems pretty well to have gone the way of Mussolini's and the late lamented Briand's. He may be able to invent enough distractions to keep critical eyes off this shady side of his administration, but they must run out some day. I notice he has got down to forbidding German women to smoke in public – how much that sounds like Mussolini's earlier days in office! The rulers of the world are putting up a grand show, and Roosevelt the biggest one of all. They are like the people who throw out hats and boots, etc., to a pack of pursuing wolves, which is all right as long as you have enough

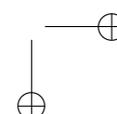
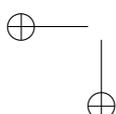


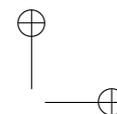
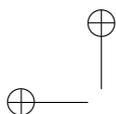


hats and boots. The papers here say that Roosevelt is enlisting 1,900,000 people, movie-actresses, crooners, and God knows what, in a forthcoming great "drive." That will be a fine spectacle, but rather expensive, I should say.

*22 August* – There is an essential unity in the civilization of Europe, even including England, I should say, that the stranger is more likely to perceive than the native. When one stays some time in Europe, one is conscious mostly of differences, as between a German and a Swiss, a Frenchman and a Hollander, etc. To see the essential unity of all their civilizations, one must look at it from Russia, China, the United States, where nothing of the sort exists.

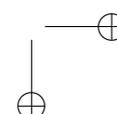
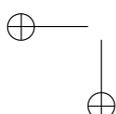
*23 August* – I saw the *Vie Parisienne* again last night, and remarked how well the Monnaie's second-string Belgian artists held up against the head-liners brought over from Paris. I am sure that Davray, who plays the part of the Baron, is the best comic actor I ever saw; and Mlle Denié is exquisite as Pauline, beside singing charmingly. The decline of opera is being discussed in the newspapers again, but I think from a wrong point of view. The old and good operas still draw full houses, but no one is composing new ones that have the same power. Those operas, however, were composed quite distinctly for an élite which set the standard of musical taste; and those who now go to hear them are, first, those who wish to know what there is in the operatic tradition, and to feel its force, and, second, the few existing survivors of the class for which they were composed. A modern composer

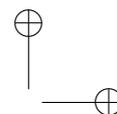
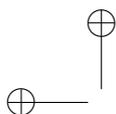




lacks the support of a fixed standard of taste and style, and hence can not go on; he does not know what his public is, or whether he has one. Another thing that will bear thinking about is that for the price of a cheap seat in the gallery of an ill-ventilated, ill-smelling opera-house, one can get a good seat in a comfortable moving-picture theatre. Opera-houses should conform most strictly to traditional style and decoration, recalling the romantic period, and thus assisting the illusion of romance on the stage; but there is no reason why they should not be well ventilated, though they never are. The last act of an opera at the Metropolitan has always been practically a blank to me on this account. The Monnaie has a new ventilating system, none too good, but an improvement.

*24 August* – I heard of someone, I think Rupert Hughes, who had made some study of our Revolutionary period, saying that if he had to choose between Mr. Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton as a companion on a desert island, he would choose Hamilton, notwithstanding he admired Mr. Jefferson much more; he thought Mr. Jefferson's intense reticence would make him a poor companion. That would not be my choice. I am sure that Mr. Jefferson's reticence is quite misunderstood. The key to it is simply that the things about which he was reticent are those which were nobody's business but his own. With regard to all other matters he was invariably the frankest and most outspoken of men. If we had a President now who spoke and wrote as he did, we would all think the world was coming to an end. Parallel his utterances with those of any President since Andrew Jackson – that will show



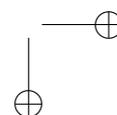
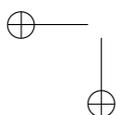


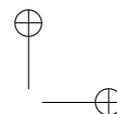
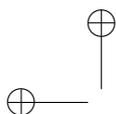
how reticent he was on all subjects that were of legitimate interest to anyone but himself.

*25 August* – Flemish makes the curious impression on me as being the tongue of a sound and straightforward people; yet it is capable of indefinite nuances, like our own language. To me, however, it has the look and sound of a fine, square-toed downrightness. At the North Station today, the sign *doorgaande trein* somehow gave me a good deal more assurance about the intentions of that train than the corresponding French sign, *train direct*. When I see the sign, *non-fumeurs* or *défense de fumer*, I do not by instinct take it as seriously as I do *niet rooken*.

*26 August* – Belgian art has kept well up to tradition in sculpture and etching; one must say that, even if there be two minds about modern Belgian painting. I see a great deal of beautiful sculpture and etching about, all lately done. The public sculpture in Brussels, from the earliest to the latest, is far better than in most cities, and when you find a bad piece, ten to one it came from somewhere outside, like the hideous war-memorial up by the Place Louise – the English gave that – and the truly remarkable statue of Victor Hugo that Rodin did. To my mind, almost the finest thing in Brussels is the group of forty-eight statues around the Petit Sablon.

*27 August* – There is a great deal of sound economic wisdom in the old German saying, *Hat der Bauer Geld, so hat's die ganze Welt*. I think this truth is on its way to be discovered presently by the nations that have neglected

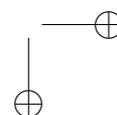
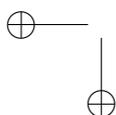


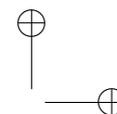
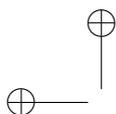


it or set it at naught; and the process of discovery will, I think, involve a great deal that is most disagreeable.

*28 August* – The people of Brussels seem uncommonly sympathetic with affliction; perhaps because as a nation the Belgians have always had so much of it. Collectors for various charities go around the restaurants and cafés every night, and nearly everyone gives them something. I often wonder how people can be found for this service. We get them for a tag-day once a year, or some such matter, but not for every night. I notice again, too, how susceptible the Bruxellois are to scenes of pathos at the theatre; they will weep over some motion-picture tragedy with no attempt at concealment or repression.

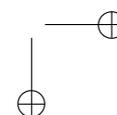
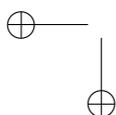
*29 August* – I see many more people wearing glasses than I ever saw before, even young people and small children, and I do not know how to account for it. Certainly as late as two years ago it was an uncommon thing to see anyone, old or young, wearing glasses; and the general strength of vision here has always been a matter of astonishment to me. Has anything actually happened, or is it that the opticians and oculists have bestirred themselves, American-fashion, and set up a propaganda? The like question occurs to me also, now that I see so many more lightning-rods here than formerly, all of a pattern that I have never seen before – the end of the rod branching into a crown or cluster of half-a-dozen tips instead of a single point. If lightning-rods are really good for anything, which I believe there is no way to determine, this would seem sensible. Lightning came down once straight between two tall trees standing no

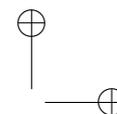
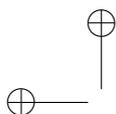




more than a hundred feet apart in a large open field, and struck a cornstalk. Since then I have had great doubts of any theory about the habits of lightning.

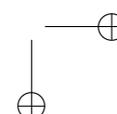
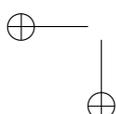
*30 August* – Lehar's Chinese operetta, *Le Pays de Sourire*, is going on here at the Alhambra. I went to see it – a spotty performance. I am never interested in these attempts at the exotic, and think no composer should make them, except for pure comedy, like the *Mikado*. I would almost rather listen to a man saw wood than hear *Lakmé*, and Bizet's music barely holds the *Pearlfishers* together long enough to let you get out of the theatre. In fact, a composer does not often do very well when he goes outside his nationality, let alone his race, for a subject of serious opera. Verdi, of course, did wonderfully with his *Traviata*, but *Carmen* and *Don Quichotte* are neither of them more than nominally Spanish, while poor Puccini's ventures into Japan and the American frontier are very dreadful. One of the most ludicrous things in the history of opera is the way Massenet metagrobolizes Dulcinea of Toboso into a Parisian harlot.

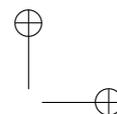
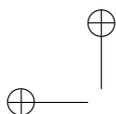




## 1933 September

*2 September* – The report of strikes in the United States today seems to justify my forecast of a month ago. Organized labour found itself plumped into the saddle by the Recovery Act, and is now naturally pressing its advantage as hard as it can – and there you are! I see also that the new regulations against the hoarding of gold are out; also the regulation giving American gold-producers the advantage of the market-price. I can not imagine anything more incongruous than these two rulings. Roosevelt officially acknowledges that a paper dollar is not the equivalent of a gold dollar, and in the same breath says that any man who has the commercial sagacity to perceive this and act accordingly must go to jail for ten years. What he is really trying to do is to put the artificial brake of a jail sentence on the operation of Gresham's law. Suppose he succeeds; the consequence will be an undermining of confidence in the currency, and consequently of confidence in the credit of the nation that issues the currency. But I dare say Roosevelt and his advisers never heard of Gresham's law, or if they



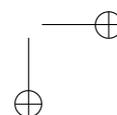
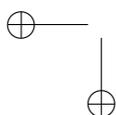


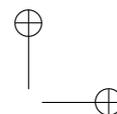
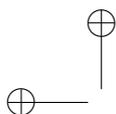
have, they probably think it was some lucubration of Cleveland's Secretary of State, back in 1893.

*3 September* – I do not know of any life of Napoleon III that shows clearly his historical position as a link with a pretty far future. He took the lead in transforming diplomacy into a commercial routine. He accepted Cobden's doctrine of free trade. He tried to establish an international currency. In many ways he showed a long look ahead. My knowledge of him and his period is only superficial, but I have often thought there might be more in both than has as yet been brought out.

*4 September* – The resemblances that one sees on the stage are sometimes very striking, and the summer season at the Monnaie has shown an uncommon lot of them. In the *Orphée*, Jupiter looks exactly like the portraits of Professor Huxley. In the *Vie Parisienne*, the Brazilian made me think of Frank Warrin, Gardefeu was the image of a man I once met in the South County, Frick was Henry Mencken slightly overgrown, and the Baron was the double of Frank Neilson as I first saw him eighteen years ago, even to the eye-glasses perched low down on his nose.

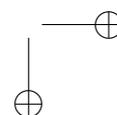
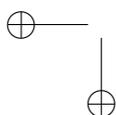
*5 September* – An interesting conversation with a street-girl this afternoon, as I sat in front of a café reading a newspaper. She asked me for a match, and we fell to talking. I told her I would have to be counted out in a business way, but she said that was quite all right, she would like to talk with me nevertheless, and we chatted for an hour or more. She was a blonde Walloon,

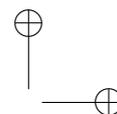
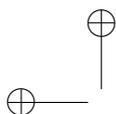




handsome as they make them, and a most charming person of fine intelligence and frank, attractive manners. As I was leaving, I asked her a question or two about her business. She said it had its ups and downs, like any other; sometimes one did very well, sometimes not. It was trying at first, until one got used to it. The principal trouble was that it did not last – you were through with it at thirty-five, with the best care you could give yourself. I asked what she would turn to then, and she said she had an eye on some line of *petit commerce*, a small shop or preferably a café. This objective attitude towards what passes among us for an immoral and sinful trade will never be understood by the stark Hebraism of England and America. Whether we are any the better for that is not for me to say; but I have great doubts about it. This lady told me she was one of eleven children, and the only one to follow that profession; but she stands well with her family and visits them regularly, like any other wage-earner. She let me go with the observation that she had enjoyed an agreeable hour, for “you have something about you that attracts women.” It was a pleasant remark, but put out so disinterestedly that it seemed much more like an appraisal than a compliment; and at that I think she was wrong. When I was a child, women used to fuss over me until I came to loathe the sight of anything in petticoats; but since I was ten years old, very few women have shown any disposition to become interested in me, but rather the contrary.

*6 September* – I heard the other day that the *Petit Faust* gave offence to many people here, and having been led by curiosity to look into the matter, I find that it is

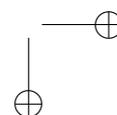
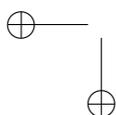


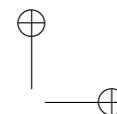
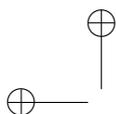


even so. One Belgian lady told me she could not make up her mind to see it, in spite of being tempted by the brilliance of the thing; and it appears that a large section of society in Brussels felt that way. I can understand it, for there is a vast deal of sentiment devoted to *Faust*, and the parody or travesty would certainly undermine it. I would not care, for my part, if I never heard *Faust* again. Goethe's masterpiece itself never interested me. I admire its architectonics profoundly, but reading it is a dreadful bore; I was never yet able to get through it, despite the best intentions. One is always aware of the fundamental anomaly of a wise old man, rejuvenated, making no better use of his time and opportunities. This weakness makes the drama fall always just short of being a great production.

*7 September* – The worst thing I see about life at the present time is that whereas the ability to think has to be cultivated by practice, like the ability to dance or to play the violin, everything is against that practice. Speed is against it, commercial amusements, noise, the pressure of mechanical diversions, reading-habits, even studies, are all against it. Hence a whole race is being bred without the power to think, or even the disposition to think, and one can not wonder that public opinion, *qua* opinion, does not exist.

*8 September* – The English papers report the saying current at home, that N.R.A. means Nuts Running America, and I can well believe it is true. Mr. Roosevelt's plan will be a good vote-getter at the next election, unless the people see through it, which is not likely; but as a matter

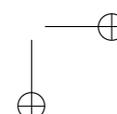
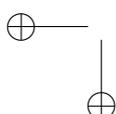


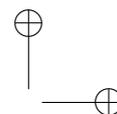
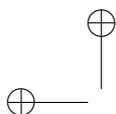


of serious public policy, it is an insane combination of State Socialism with private enterprise. Under it, the bureaucracy proposes to establish the conditions of business, and let private enterprise pay the bills. I see he is now urging the banks to finance enterprises far and away beyond the limits of sound banking, in utter disregard of the country's experiences only six months ago. He proposes to increase wages and to increase prices, both by artificial means. But wages are costs – who is to pay them, and from what fund? Moreover, how will he maintain such a relation between wages and prices as to ensure an increase in real wages rather than apparent wages? He may be depending on the notorious fact that Americans have never known the difference between real and apparent wages, if indeed he knows it himself.

*9 September* – I have never seen anything like the affection which the people of Brussels have for cats, nor anything like the privileged position which cats occupy. One could write a very interesting newspaper-yarn about the daily incidents in which cats are the central figure. The cats are magnificent creatures, full of dignity. They know their position, and treat the attentions of unauthorized persons with great disdain.

*10 September* – Is there any vocation to which a person is more signally born, than the restaurant business? I doubt it. One can always tell at once, I think, whether a proprietor started from scratch when he learned his trade, or whether nature was behind him from birth. There is something in the character of the place which is eloquent of the difference. The mere sight of the

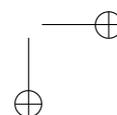
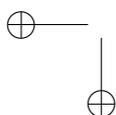


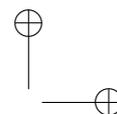
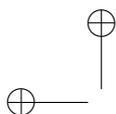


Charlemagne here, or the old Stielen, or the Royale, or Papa Vogt's establishment at Bonn, or Frau Feist's at Traben, would convince any discerning person that the proprietors were predestined to their line of business before the foundations of the world were laid.

*11 September* – I have just read Renan's eulogy, or farewell address, delivered in the Paris-Nord railway-station almost exactly fifty years ago, 1 October, 1883, when Tourgueniev's body was put on a train to be taken back to Russia. It brought to my mind again the number of great men that every country in Europe had at that period, and the fact that such men apparently exist no longer. I am a little pragmatic in my judgment of an age; I measure it by what it has produced in the way of human values. With all respect for the amount of apparatus developed in fifty years, I have yet to be convinced that the net sum of human happiness is as great as it was in 1883, or the sum of distinctly human qualities – notably intelligence – anything like as high. Somebody might make a very interesting study of a possible equivalent of Gresham's law operating in the spiritual world, and also a possible equivalent of the law of diminishing returns.

*12 September* – The summer season of operetta is over. It ended Sunday night with a grand performance of *Orphée aux Enfers*, and now the Monnaie is getting ready to open for the regular season on 1 October. I asked some of my friends here whether they thought the *Orphée* as disrespectful towards Gluck and Greek mythology as the *Petit Faust* is towards Gounod and mediæval folk-lore. They said yes, no doubt it was, but it did not seem so

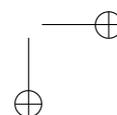
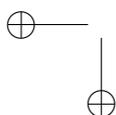


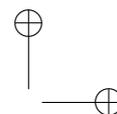
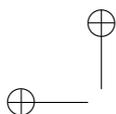


nearly sacrilegious *to them*. From which one can infer the great truth which is often stated in terms, but which is so seldom turned to any good use, that sentiment is as much a reality as a mountain, and as little regardful of logic. Unfortunately, the only people who seem to know the power of this truth, and who make it work steadily for them, are politicians.

*13 September* – The French government is suddenly making up to the Soviets at a great rate. M. Herriot has just done the grand tour of Russia, and now M. Cot is setting forth with a considerable retinue. Such effect does the spectre of Hitlerite Germany produce! – an amusing spectacle. The old proverb about politics making strange bedfellows is quite wrong; it makes the most natural bedfellowships in the world. Crook lies down with crook in any bed that interest offers; swine snoozes with swine on the litter of any pen that interest opens.

*14 September* – Sudden cold, rain and wind – how sudden the transitions are here! The next three months here will be dreadful. The suddenness of the change makes it seem no end long ago that I was eating dinner out-of-doors on the terrace of the *Trois Suisses*, yet it was only the other day. I have decided to sail for New York by the *Volendam* on the 22nd, and shall probably find the usual difference in climate. I remember when the first French transatlantic fliers were on their way to New York, a discussion came up at the club about their route. Everybody said New York was on this latitude, and were greatly surprised when I told them it was almost exactly on the latitude of Lisbon. They would not believe me



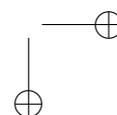
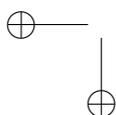


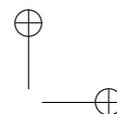
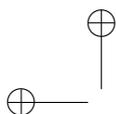
until M. Périer got out an atlas and looked it up. This season has been very dry, yet the leaves are still on the trees and still green, which is unusual.

*15 September* – It is impossible for me to manage anything like the right intonation of Flemish, and I believe it is impossible for anybody but a native. Downtown today I asked a handsome pleasant Flemish gal where a certain street was, and she told me to keep straight on past the Flemish Theatre, and it would be the first street to the left. I thought then if I could only pronounce the words *Vlaamsche Schouwburg* as she did, I would call it the greatest achievement of my life.

*16 September* – I see that another book has been written about the Tory exiles of the Revolutionary period. Some day it may be realized, not only what our civilization is, but what it always was. Our nation started by crowding out most of its best material, and it has consistently done so ever since; it has been the steadfast implacable enemy of intelligence, culture, high-mindedness. I have no illusions about the loyalists, but unquestionably they had among them some of the most cultivated minds and the finest characters in America, as well as many of the ablest and most experienced in practical affairs. There is no more room in America for such today than there was then; but instead of being bayoneted out, they are nowadays merely elbowed out. I know many of them, and speak whereof I know.

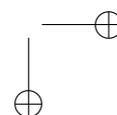
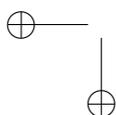
*17 September* – I believe that the *petit commerce* helps greatly to keep the general standard of business integrity

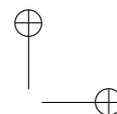
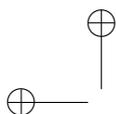




here so much higher than it is at home. Each of the enormous number of little shops that line the streets of Brussels does a neighbourhood business, and any slight lack of confidence quickly spreads. I remember a country doctor once telling me that he had to be good, because everybody knew him, and if his patients lost confidence in him, he was “through.” He said that if he did not know his business, he would settle in a big city, and as fast as one locality smoked him out, he would move to another; but in the country there was no chance of that. I have seen several little businesses here closed up on this account; they got very short shrift. Watching the *petit commerce* also gives one an idea of the immense part the women play in the economic life of these countries. I think it would make relatively little difference to the economic life of the United States if all our women died overnight; we would, for the most part, have only to replace a lot of more or less competent and trustworthy employees. But if anything like that happened in Belgium the country would go bust in two weeks.

*18 September* – Two hard blows! The Monnaie’s regular season opens 1 October with *Prince Igor*, which I don’t care about hearing them do; but next night they give the *Petit Duc* – and I shall not be here. Then, too, the Taverne Royale has passed into the hands of a soulless corporation, the big brewing concern that owns the Métropole; and it is going to be entirely done over and “modernized.” Well, there are a few left yet; the Charlemagne, the Ferévisse, Chantraine’s, the Leyman – yes, there are many. Still, the Royale had such a fine character, and was such a good old friend; one hates

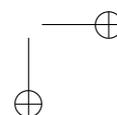
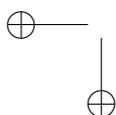


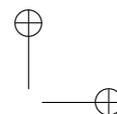
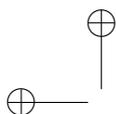


to see it go. Perhaps it is just as well for young people that they are being brought up in ignorance of taste, sentiment and romance; knowing nothing, they will miss nothing, and will be comfortable in their old age. Still, I can't say I would change with them, for what I have had in the way of local attachments, I have had, and the memory of it makes life happy, as mine is, thoroughly; and I would rather be happy than comfortable, if I can't be both – and if one wants little, one can be comfortable, too, in almost any circumstances.

*19 September* – Residents have practically all come back now from their sojourn in the country and at the seaside, and the town is full of people. The summer visitors, tourists and trippers, country-people from Belgian villages, have all gone home. There is a great difference visible in the look of the population. I understand why my friends disagree with my admiration of the people here, especially the women; they have been here in summer, when the city was full of nondescript outsiders. At that, no end of the people who live south of the Bourse the year round are handsome enough for anybody, but as they are poor, one has to make allowance for unkemptness and inferior dress in order to get a fair estimate of them.

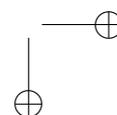
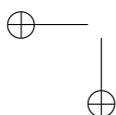
*20 September* – I spent a long time in the Wiertz Museum today. It strikes me that artists and critics ought to unite in a determined move to clean the mud off the memory of Anton Wiertz. He is commonly put down, even by the guide-books, as something more than half crazy, morbid and unwholesome – an abominable libel. The history

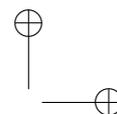
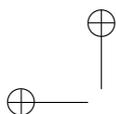




and purpose of the pictures which are supposed to bear out this view are perfectly well known, and their story should be told at large and forced into the history of Belgian art; it testifies to a strong, generous and sane social sense. One can easily see why he was defamed; his work was so subversive and at the same time so great that he had to be – there was nothing else to be done about it. The truth about Wiertz is that he was the last of the giants, a very great artist, equally good in every medium and in every style; and moreover, he was a very great man. The Belgian Ministry of Fine Arts might make a decent reputation for integrity and disinterestedness by rehabilitating him officially, but there is little likelihood that it will do so. I hear some talk of his paintings being removed to Dinant, where he was born, but I do not know what there is in it, actually.

*21 September* – My connexions here bring me into contact with a number of wise, experienced old boys who are at the head of affairs and who are slapped up against every economic and political situation in the world, every day they live. They do not talk to me as they do when they talk officially. One of them, speaking today about the N.R.A. jamboree, said that of course we could stand it and still prosper, because the country was so rich and so thinly populated that it could stand almost anything and still prosper; but, he said, all this hullabaloo was so enormously expensive. He called Roosevelt's performances a series of *galéjades*, which I thought hit the mark precisely. I looked over the statistics of the world's business as summarized in London, and find that they show every country in the world improving; that with us

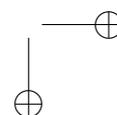
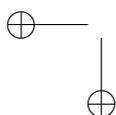


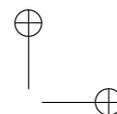
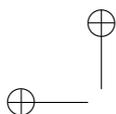


improvement set in during the month of June, and there is no evidence whatever of any acceleration due to the interferences of politics.

*22 September* – The Dutch, by and large, have no opinion of Rotterdam, except as a good place to do business. Tell them that you had a fine dinner there, and they will laugh merrily; yet the best dinners I ever had in Holland were at the Bagatelle, on the Coolsingel. Dr. Moll van Charante told me in Coimbra that it no longer existed, and I find today that he is right. Nevertheless I had a grand dinner at the Tivoli, not far away, and now I am on the *Volendam*; we sail at midnight, as always, worse luck! I would like to see the river. Leaving the Low Countries and their peoples is a hard wrench, all the harder as one grows in age and in respect for their sterling qualities. But one must forget all that for the moment and be hopeful of soon returning.

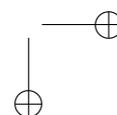
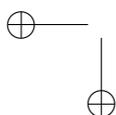
*25 September* – I have been thinking of how old some of our brand-new economic nostrums really are. Price-regulation by State authority (through State purchase, like our Farm Board) was tried in China about 350 B.C. It did not work. It was tried again, with State distribution, in the first century A.D., and did not work. Private trading was suppressed in the second century B.C., and regional planning was tried a little later. They did not work; the costs were too high. In the eleventh century A.D., a plan like the R.F.C. was tried, but again cost too much. State monopolies are very old; there were two in China in the seventh century B.C. I suppose there is not

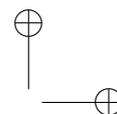
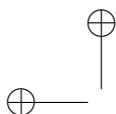




a single item on the modern politician's agenda that was not tried and found wanting ages ago.

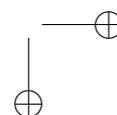
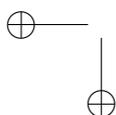
*27 September* – Again I notice the superior quality of our ship's list. I believe the Holland-America line, voyage in and voyage out, carries more civilized human freight than all the others put together. I wonder that all civilized travellers do not take it – if perchance not all of them do – for its ships provide precisely what a civilized person desires. I like this ship best of all the fleet, and it appears to be the favourite of the company's older clients, now that the *Nieuw Amsterdam* has gone out of service. I think her popularity was made by Captain de Koning and his chief steward, Mr. le Jeune; they had a great genius for their profession. What superb navigators I have sailed with on this line, men of the real stock of Tromp and de Ruijter. Thinking of them reminds me of how old I am getting to be. Stenger, Baron, van den Heuvel, van Walraven, de Koning, Leeuwen, de Jong – all of them real skippers, who learned their trade in the old hard school; and all retired now, some of them dead. I don't believe the line has many clients left who have travelled with Captain Stenger. Curiously, I never made a voyage with Captain Krol; he was the only one in that grand old hierarchy of the sea whom I did not know. They were as fine a set of men as I ever saw, unpretentious, considerate, and if they liked you, very friendly. They built up a great name for the line, and the line deserves it. I have never willingly taken any other, and all those I have taken seemed very unsatisfactory by comparison.

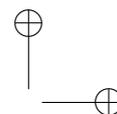
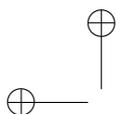




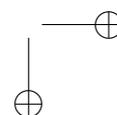
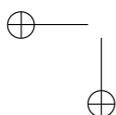
*28 September* – Thinking over Hitler's anti-Semitism, one is forced to admit, I believe, that the Nazis could not have carried their programme through and made it work, without clearing the Jews out of Germany. I do not think their programme was ever worth carrying through, but they did; and admitting that, probably the only course open to them was the one they took. From 1918 to 1932, Germany's circumstances were such that her domestic organization had to be carried on pretty much on the honour system. Most of the Germans played the game fairly and loyally, as far as I have been able to find out; the Jews, on the other hand, cut every corner they could – and there you are. The trouble about the whole European situation at present is that an informed and reasonable outsider, when he is on the ground, has to distribute his sympathies with such precise impartiality. I have heard Frenchmen, Germans and Belgians talk, and I am sure if I were French, German or Belgian, I would feel, talk and probably act as most of my countrymen were doing. I see the force of every point they make, and the balance of points is perfect; one can not take sides. I doubt that I should follow Hitler unreservedly; but I might even do that, thinking that the leadership of a wretched lunatic was preferable in the circumstances to none at all – I hope not, but I might. It will be certainly a change to be in America again, where an ignorant and prejudiced partisanship is the universally popular thing to assume; intellectually, one can have a very easy time there, simply by not using one's mind.

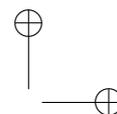
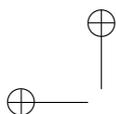
*29 September* – Half the passengers are American. Looking them over in the dining-room, I notice again how





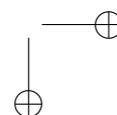
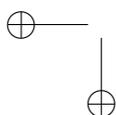
much the standard of Belgian table-manners is like our own, and unlike what one finds mostly elsewhere on the Continent, and especially in France. A tableful of Frenchmen in Paris can be heard as far as Versailles, under favourable atmospheric conditions, and a tableful of Frenchwomen perhaps even farther. The greatest public improvement that France could make, from our point of view, would be the invention of a noiseless soup-spoon. The Belgians eat rapidly but daintily and gracefully – they do everything gracefully. If one dawdles over one's food, as I do, the Belgian hostess is uneasy, thinking something is wrong; but I never saw a Belgian fall on his food with fierce and noisy voracity. As far as I have had occasion to see, also, the Dutch standard of manners is like ours, though I have not been thrown with Dutchmen at the table as much as with other Continental peoples. My generalization about the French must be taken as admitting exceptions, of course, and the odd thing about those, in my experience, is that they all appeared in the humbler classes. I have seen a few of the plainer sort of French who showed what we would call very good table-manners; but I never happened to see any among the high-life – not one that I can recall – who I thought would not have done better to have a trough in front of him. This does not apply to the few specimens that I have seen of transplanted French high-life resident in this country; their table-manners are on our own standard – which, by the way, is astonishingly uniform, when one reads reports of what it was half a century ago. I seldom see an American whose table-manners are not up to standard, even if otherwise he is a pretty poor sample. I put this down to our being so largely a gynecocracy –

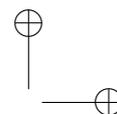
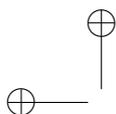




one of the incidental good effects of the unprecedented social control that our women exercise.

*30 September* – I have been trying to establish in my mind an answer to the question, What is the greatest thing that has happened in my lifetime? I think it is this: In my lifetime the world (I mean the whole Western world) turned away from current metaphysics, and devoted itself to an investigation of the concrete. It carried this on with immense diligence and great apparent success, until now, in my old age, it has landed in a mess of metaphysics that make the metaphysics of my youth look like a, b, c. In my middle years, the men of science were very cocky about the results of their explorations into matter, force, the nature of the universe, and so on. Then suddenly their conclusions went into the discard as new lines of investigation opened out, and new modes of conjecture seemed to be indicated – modes purely metaphysical, so much so that they made Huxley's refuge of agnosticism look uncommonly inviting. I consider this excursion from metaphysics to metaphysics the greatest thing that has taken place in my day. One likes the attitude that the modern scientificer assumes towards it. A couple of years ago, for instance, one of them told his students that he could state the problem of a magnet's pull on steel, give some formulas that seemed invariable, perhaps simplify the problem a little and move it one or two steps backward; but as for solving it, all he could say at present was that the magnet pulled on the steel because God wanted it to.

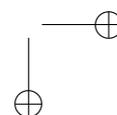
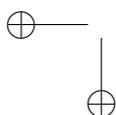


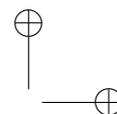
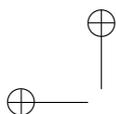


## 1933 October

*1 October* – Why is it, I wonder, that when one speaks of the mass-man, one is always taken to mean the poor man or the workingman? I am glad to see that Ortega y Gasset goes out of his way to puncture this error. If one wished to cite a perfect specimen of the mass-man, one would cite Henry Ford, Hoover, John D. Rockefeller. Speaking of Ortega y Gasset, how one wishes he could write better. In Spanish for Spaniards, his writing may be first-class for all I know, since I know no Spanish worth mentioning, but for English-speaking people he needs an interpreter rather than a translator. In this he is like the German Oppenheimer, whose invaluable book, *The State*, is so needlessly hard to read in English. I never read it in German, so I do not know what its original quality is or what impression it would make on the German reader of average German cultivation.

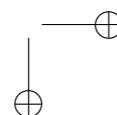
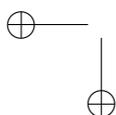
*2 October* – I landed in New York this noon, and shall stay in the city for two or three weeks, probably, picking up my loose threads, and getting some idea of what is what. I have confronted pleasanter prospects in my day,

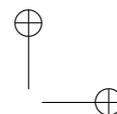
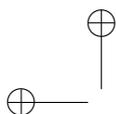




but I feel in good shape for anything that comes along, and even have some curiosity about what is actually taking place here.

*28 October* – I have not written a line to record a single incident, thought or observation in this place for nearly a month. I have had no wish to do so, preferring not to trust to my day-to-day impressions, which have been much sharper by reason of my long absence in surroundings so different from anything here. When one returns after having been away for some time, certain characteristics of life here come out with great clearness; after a while one's impressions of them are modified and other matters come into notice. Some good things have happened. I have the chance this winter to write a little book on the outcome, so far, of eighteenth-century political theory. I have wanted to do this for some time. I would like the chance to give some of it in the form of lectures next spring, if I could get an audience, formal or informal, at some college or university. I shall try to manage this if it is possible, but I doubt my being able to do it, as I am not in very good favour in those circles. There is some vague talk of an editorship for me, which would be a temptation if it came to anything definite. The worst of it is that it would tie me down, and I am always drooping when in these parts, and only half myself. Nevertheless the sense of being somewhat in the current of things again, instead of on the grand stand, might be a tonic. Besides, after all one's complaints about having no place in this society, if one were offered a place in good faith, it would be shabby not to accept it in good

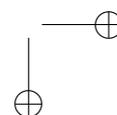
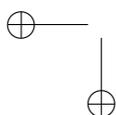


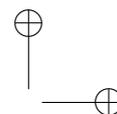
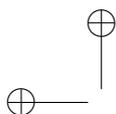


faith, if there were no insurmountable reason against it. In fact, one should wish to take it, as I am sure I would.

*29 October* – And so Brother Hitler decides he will no longer play with the League of Nations. This leaves the League in “rather a shattered state,” as Artemus Ward said of the Confederate army after Lee’s surrender. “That army now consists of Kirby Smith, four mules, and a Bass drum, and is movin rapidly tords Taxis.”

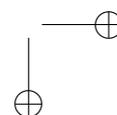
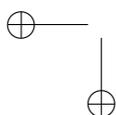
*30 October* – Public doings in this country are beyond all comment. Roosevelt has assembled in Washington the most extraordinary aggregation of quacks, I imagine, that was ever seen herded together. His passage from the scene of political action will remove the most lively showman that has been seen in America since the death of P. T. Barnum. The absence of opposition is remarkable; Republicans seem to have forgotten that the function of an Opposition is to oppose. I say this in derision, of course, for our politics are always purely bi-partisan. I have talked with many people; no one has any confidence in Roosevelt’s notions, but the “organs of public opinion” either praise him or are silent; and no one expects that Congress will call him on the carpet. The only certain things are that his fireworks will cost a lot of money, and that they will enlarge our bureaucracy indefinitely. Most of the big Federal slush-fund that the taxpayers will create next year will go to local politicians, nominally for “improvements,” unemployment or what not, but actually for an increase of jobs and jobbery. This ought to build up a very strong machine for the next campaign, as I am convinced it is meant to do – and all it is meant to

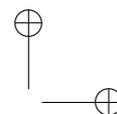
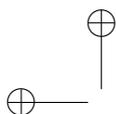




do – and no doubt it will. I notice that the new move of juggling with the price of gold has been turned over to the R.F.C. instead of to the Treasury; thus making the R.F.C. a personal agent of the President.

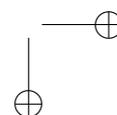
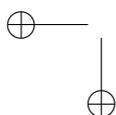
*31 October* – To my mind, there was never a better example of getting up a scare in order, as Mr. Jefferson said, to “waste the labours of the people under the pretence of taking care of them.” Our improvement, such as it is, was under way in June, and there is no evidence whatever that Mr. Roosevelt’s meddling has accelerated it. One is reminded of the headlong haste about framing the Federal Constitution, on the pretext that the country was going to the dogs under the Articles of Confederation; when in fact it was doing very well indeed, as recent researches have shown. All this is a despicable trick. The papers say that in this business of meddling with the gold-market, Roosevelt is influenced by the theories of Irving Fisher. It reminds me that when I was in Europe I heard that one of Hitler’s principal lieutenants is a chap that I used to know pretty well; I can never remember his name; the only name I can think of is Helfschlager, and that is not right. His family are the big art-dealers in Munich – Hanfstingel, that’s it. I got well acquainted with him in New York, and saw him afterward in Munich, and came away with the considered belief that he is a fine fellow and uncommonly likable, but just as crazy as a loon. I have long had precisely that opinion of Fisher. Therefore if it is true that Irving Fisher is to the front in America and Helfschlager in Germany, I think the future for both countries looks pretty dark.

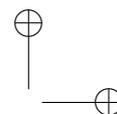
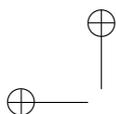




### 1933 November

*1 November* – I asked Dr. Wilcox yesterday whether Osler's work on the practice of medicine was still standard. He said no; and the reason why it was always disappointing was that Osler had so much in himself that could not be got into any book. I knew Dr. Osler well enough to understand how this was so. The obscure quality that he had – whatever it is – is the mark of the great physician. Plato, in his *Meno*, speaks of its therapeutic value, in the account he gives of cures wrought by Zamolxis, the deified king of the Thracians. Rabelais mentions it, and appears to have had it; Scaliger also seems to have had it, judging by very imperfect accounts. Osler evidently thought it was to some degree cultivable, perhaps to a greater degree than it actually is. Dr. Wilcox talked very interestingly about the practitioners who accepted the results of science without any sense of the ability, labour and devotion that went into producing them; he said this failure made the acceptance largely ineffectual in practice. I think he touched here upon the truth underlying the complaint that this age lacks reverence. Certainly this age, more than any other,

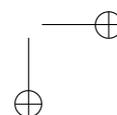
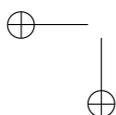


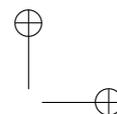
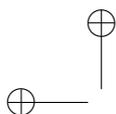


I believe, accepts and uses what is handed to it, from motor-cars to mediæval achitecture, in a spirit that is, to say the least, unhistorical – properly speaking, purely barbarous, because purely superficial. This, I think, invalidates the use that the age makes of its legacies. One could write a very good essay on the practical value of reverence.

*2 November* – Apparently the noble experiment of ostracising Russia is booked for the discard, in company with the noble experiment of ostracising John Barleycorn. I wonder what that snuffy old Pecksniff, Hughes, thinks about the high moral ground he used to take against the Soviets when he was Secretary of State – though undoubtedly he does not think about it at all, for he knows as well as any of us what a wretched dishonest performance it was. Recognition of Russia may get us some trade, in view of Hitler's Russophobe policy; but it will certainly tend to take public attention somewhat off domestic matters, and may perhaps give the Japanese something to think about. On this last point, however, if anyone thinks Russia will ever act as cat's-paw for us in any Far Eastern disturbance, I think he has another guess. Any mess over there – anywhere in Europe, in fact – that Russia could stay out of, would make her everlasting fortune as a neutral purveyor of supplies; and if anyone knows this better than Litvinov, it is Karakhan.

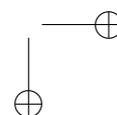
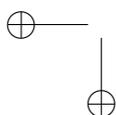
*3 November* – Does anyone nowadays know the brilliant and witty nonsense-verses of Lord Neaves? Reading about the New Deal yesterday put me in mind of one of them:

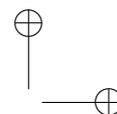
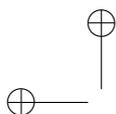




There will nothing be left  
When no property's left  
    To give meum and tuum their weight-o;  
But when all's a dead level,  
Starvation and revel  
    Alike are excluded by Plato.  
These Communist doctrines of Plato  
Have again come in fashion of late-o;  
    But the makers of money,  
    The hoarders of money,  
Won't be pleased with these prospects of Plato.

*4 November* – Seeing the mob tagging along after Roosevelt's circus-parade, reminds me of something I have not thought of for many a long day. At a child's party in the South County years ago, a dozen or more brats were playing Follow-my-leader, and the leader was a city boy, up there for a visit; all the rest were local children. The leader pulled a leaf of poison-ivy, put it in his mouth and chewed it up, and the others all followed suit. It took seven years for one of them to get the poison out of her system. The point is that every single whelp in the lot, except the leader, knew perfectly well what poison-ivy was and what it would do; yet they all followed tamely, because that was the rule of the game. Just so one general cry of "Support the President" will bring the whole country to heel behind anyone, even though he may be known of all as a self-seeking fellow, ignorant as a dog, and his policies utter mischievous nonsense. So far, I have not met a single person who takes a grain of stock in what Roosevelt is doing, or who thinks him any better than a clever showman, yet most of them

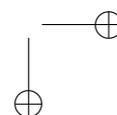
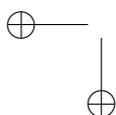


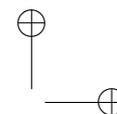
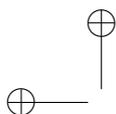


are “going along.” Nevertheless I suspect that there will be a good deal of complaint in another month or so. When Congress meets, it will at least serve the purpose of releasing a lot of dissatisfaction that now is pent up.

*5 November* – Reading an excellent new life of Carlyle, by Emery Neff, whom I never heard of, evidently a professor. He knows a great deal about the art of biography, and has done well. I could never read Carlyle, but I admire him for his cussedness and his crusty readiness to say just what he thought about anybody and anything, and why he thought it, and to put forth his opinions good and hot. I wish there were a few more like him writing nowadays. One gets an awful surfeit of mush-and-milk in the current writing about public affairs. It reminds me of the preacher who told his people that “unless you repent, as it were, and, as one might say, have a change of heart, you will be damned – so to speak – and, in a measure, go to hell.” There was none of that sort of bilgewater in Carlyle’s pronouncements, and he did a good spot of work in his time; a sturdy and honest Scot, if ever there was one.

*6 November* – It looks as if the French Government were due to blow up shortly. Anyone who cares to see a grand explosion needs but to do one of three things – propose reducing the personnel of the French bureaucracy, propose reducing its pay, or propose taxing the small-holding landed proprietors. He will get results inside of an hour. French politicians make ours look like shoemakers. The only people that we can put up to match them are in the banking business. Some hand-picked American bankers

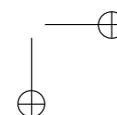
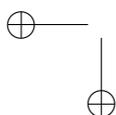


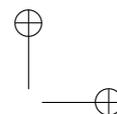
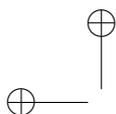


and French politicians would make a grand combination, worth going miles to see, if one left one's watch and pocket-book at home. I notice, by the way, that Bro. Mitchell, erstwhile head of the National City Bank, is at large. When I left the country last February, as I remember, his fate was pending.

*7 November* – I missed my guess completely on the repeal of the Prohibition Amendment. What put me off was that I thought there was still money enough in Prohibition to keep it going a while longer, and it turned out that there was not. This was a complete surprise to me. Another thing that I failed to consider was the rapid drying-up of the stream of jobbery, forcing local politicians to look anxiously around for some new source of supplies. The allocations of Federal relief-money and the public-works programme will help these gentry out of their predicament nobly, and liquor-taxes look large as a revenue-producer. I should have known what the situation was, but I was so sure that the time for a redistribution had not come yet that I was inattentive.

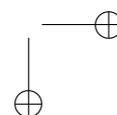
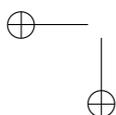
*8 November* – I have been trying for four days to get a typewriter cleaned up and adjusted, about half an hour's work, I should say, for anyone who knew his business. When done it was only half done, a very poor scamped job. Just now I met Bill Tachau in front of the Club Anonyme, swearing mad. The club has put in a new oil-burning furnace, defective in some way, a trifling matter, merely some little readjustment needed, and Bill, being chairman of the House Committee, had been after the furnace-concern for two days to get a man sent around to

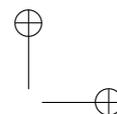
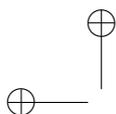




fix it, but with no luck yet. It is the depression, of course – there is so devilish much unemployment that you can't get anybody to do any work on anything. Out of curiosity I have spoken about this to several men lately, and they all say the same thing. If the State keeps on much longer with its paternalistic meddling, Washington will have to send janizaries out to follow up “unemployment relief” and shove food down the unemployed's throats – probably the food will have to be predigested, at that.

*10 November* – It is interesting to find the historian Josephus talking about the Jewish nationalist revolutionaries as “bandits” (λησται) just as our journalists used to talk about Sandino and the little chap that made trouble in the Philippines years ago – I can't remember his name. Josephus speaks of Eleazar, who was sent to Rome in chains by the procurator Antonius Felix, as an αρχιληστης. According to one set of texts that somehow escaped the Christian censorship, he applied the same term to Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian censors, established by Constantine and active afterward as long as was necessary, certainly did a good thorough job, so thorough that it is now practically impossible to get any competent account of Christian origins from any but Christian sources. I have been looking at some photostat reproductions of Jewish manuscripts that show their work, and I must say it is astonishingly well done. Between what they blacked out and what they interpolated, they turned out a fine Bowdlerized document. As for methods, those of the modern censor and editor show curiously little change or improvement over theirs. They are a plague to the scholar, though, for one would

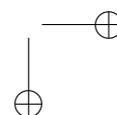
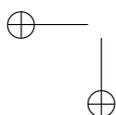


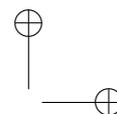
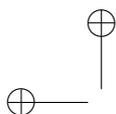


give a good deal to know how the inception and rise of Christianity looked to Jewish and Roman eyes – and doubtless we shall never know anything about it, really.

*11 November* – How odd it is that while Socialism can not muster a corporal’s guard of voters in this country, the successive steps that lead directly to a Socialist régime (of course under another name) are not dreaded or deplored by anyone, but are taken willingly and gladly. The Federal Farm Board, the adventures of the State in railway-control, in aviation, road-building, control of shipping and waterways, the endless run of so-called “social” legislation – well, there you have it. Now the cry is to set up “national planning” of industry under a Board of Economic Control. Why not honourably and candidly swallow the dose, name and all?

*12 November* – Now that the Prohibition Amendment is to go, it will take one good thing with it. The speakeasy in New York, providing as it did the best food in town, got a good many people into the way of liking the small quiet restaurant, as on the Continent, especially in Belgium and France. This is an example, in a small way, of the unexpected incidence of well-intended legislation. Probably no one realized that the Mann Act would be a prolific breeder of blackmail, or that our “social” legislation would transform whole batches of men into loafers, or that the National Recovery Act would almost automatically – quite automatically – hoist organized labour into the saddle and hold it there. It is these unforeseen and unforeseeable effects of State-meddling that make it so dangerous. State intervention upon the individual

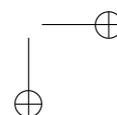
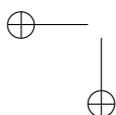


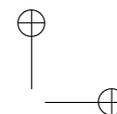
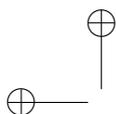


has progressed to such a point that as I look at the Western countries, they now seem to me like a lot of cancer-patients. In this country at this moment we are seeing just the state of things set in that set in on Rome after the time of the Antonines – the extreme development of the State, accompanied by a degeneration and decay of the whole social body, precisely comparable to a cancer feeding on its host. There is no help for this, I believe, so one may as well accept it as it stands.

*13 November* – An extremely pleasant evening at the Players' Club, commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Edwin Booth. It was well-managed, intimate, informal and sincere, therefore really affecting. Some few of the members who had known Booth, and even played in his company, like Gillette and Otis Skinner, were there, and their reminiscences made Booth out to be, what he must have been, an extraordinary man. He seems to have been much revered in his day for his personal as well as his professional qualities, and his memory has become classic. There were curious coincidences connected with his death. He died in his bedroom at the Players' Club. A severe thunderstorm was going on at the time, and at the moment of his death all the lights in the house went out. Either then or at the time of his funeral, I am not sure which, Ford's Theatre, the scene of his most crushing misfortune, collapsed.

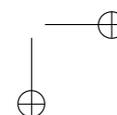
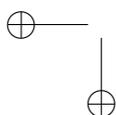
*14 November* – At lunch today with E. S. Martin. His deafness has wonderfully protected him from dishevelment, so that he leads a quiet reflective existence, quite completely retired within himself, as Marcus Aurelius

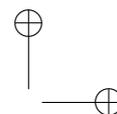
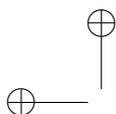




says it is in the power of all of us to do. He is interested in spiritism, which led us to talk a good deal about spiritist manifestations. I liked his detachment and freedom from prepossession in speaking of them. He has done a good deal with such matters in one way and another, and thinks, as I do, that there is some faculty brought into play about which we know practically nothing, but perhaps may put ourselves in the way of learning more, as time goes on. I see nothing against this. I am willing to believe, in fact quite convinced, that there is something in it, and see no reason why more than we now know may not be discovered. But it is so far beyond me, and so out of my line, that I think I have really no curiosity about it. I am interested, just as I am interested in any possible achievement by the mind of man, but such investigations are for someone else who is better equipped for making them.

*16 November* – The book on Henry George that I have been asking for these many years is at last published by Macmillan. The author is a professor of philosophy, out in the University of North Dakota, and he has done a grand piece of work. I am thoroughly satisfied with it, and take more satisfaction out of it than I would if I had done it myself. Its being published by Macmillan is unfortunate, I think. I know several publishers who I believe would have done much better by it. The trouble is that the Schalkenbach Foundation financed the publication; on those terms, a big house like the Macmillan's takes on a book as simply so much in the day's work, with no special interest in it. However, it may have a long sale. The truth is, though, that no one takes any

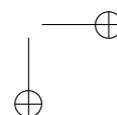
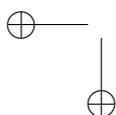


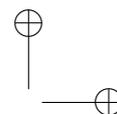
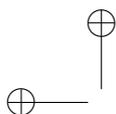


interest in George's philosophy, or can be got to take any. We will go through every quack remedy, emollient, and patent medicine that any ignorant witch-doctor at Washington chooses to recommend, before we will think of submitting to a radical cure; and it will then be too late.

*17 November* – At luncheon with Robert Lovett, whom I have not seen for a long time – too long. He commented humorously on the fact that everybody in our public life is now saying exactly the things about the war and its origins that he and I were saying twelve years ago, and were almost alone in saying. What an inordinate contempt for public opinion, and especially for its leaders and their standards of leadership, this sort of thing breeds – and for a public that is too inanimate, and has too little self-respect, to resent its ignorant and venal leaders, and make proper reprisals on them for their misfeasances!

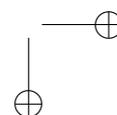
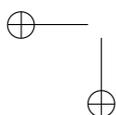
*18 November* – A young friend told me last night that one felt the impending repeal of Prohibition as the lifting of a dark cloud, the passing of a nightmare about which nothing could be done, but there it always was. I imagine there is something in this. I dare say that a sense of rehabilitation of one's self-respect is fairly common, even if those who feel it do not analyze their emotion. As a piece of State-meddling, Prohibition was certainly rather special; it was a definite and direct act which cut straight through all classes of society, and in one way or another affected everybody. It was spectacular; everyone could see it. The trouble with the other instances of our ever-growing State-meddling is that they are less so; one

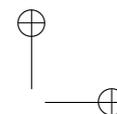
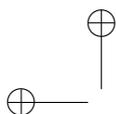




can ignore them with no great effort. Thus, for example, people do not resent the despicable dishonesty of repudiation, six months ago, because they never handled much gold money, and a paper dollar looks as it always did. The same is true of the other gigantic speculations and swindlings lately perpetrated by the same agency. Each one directly and visibly *comes home*, as we say, only to a limited class. Prohibition came home to everybody, teetotaler or drinker. If any regard for the vicious *principle* of State-meddling could be inculcated, the case would be very different, but that is quite impossible.

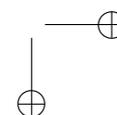
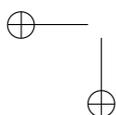
*19 November* – Robert Lovett and I were speaking the other day about the unusual opportunity for American writers these next three years. I have been thinking about it a good deal since, and in one sense I see it, but not in another. There is plenty to write about, but precious little opportunity to publish. If we had even one review that had any kind of standing or quality, I would agree wholly, but there is no such thing. For instance, suppose someone should write a set of essays on the principle of State intervention upon the individual – essays that the collapse of Prohibition makes very pertinent just now – where could he publish them? I do not know. What an extraordinary thing it must seem to those who do not know America, that in all this land there is not a single review that has the character and influence of the *Mercure de France*, or the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, or any one of half a dozen others in the same country! It is a matter of continual wonderment to me that there is none, notwithstanding my knowledge and experience

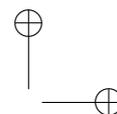
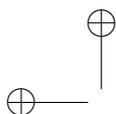




of the conditions under which such a publication would have to exist.

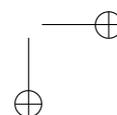
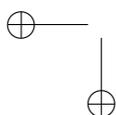
*20 November* – It is a strange thing, when one thinks of it, that one so naturally uses the obvious bad traits of a class or a people as a kind of identification-mark. I often find myself doing it, although I know better and although I know that the judgment I am making is purely superficial and improper. For instance, this morning I was thinking of one of our newspapers here in New York as a typical *echt*-Jewish enterprise, for its peculiar quality of unscrupulousness and shabbiness. There is nothing in this, of course. The Jews that we respect and enjoy having around are agreeable to us in virtue of the absence of those qualities that we commonly put down as characteristically Jewish. So it is with any other race or class. We think of the Germans or French by the side of the faults or vices that we lump off on them as a nation, and then we like an individual German or Frenchman because he is without those faults – we think of him, that is, not as French or German, but merely as a person, as “folks.” No member ever thinks of the Jews in the Club Anonyme, for instance, as Jews. Ask a member about one of them, and he would probably have to think a minute in order to bring back to his mind the fact that the man is a Jew. The Spaniards stand before one’s casual judgment as lazy, deceitful and full of false pride, yet none of us ever thinks of Pedro de Córdoba as a Spaniard. All this points to the commonness and silliness of this sort of generalization, which we all know to be silly, so it is odd that we are victimized by it so easily.

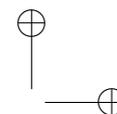
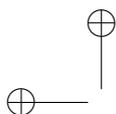




*21 November* – I hear that Einstein is to give a violin-recital sometime next month, as a benefit-performance for some cause or other, I do not know what, but probably a good one. It puts me in mind of what I consider one of the finest feats I ever witnessed. After dinner one night at Dr. Beck's in Chicago, Einstein and a young violinist, I think a Hollander, and a Dane at the piano, played Bach's double concerto perfectly. The point is that all three were absolute strangers to one another, having never met before or read a note of music together; and in the double concerto any little failure, even the slightest, comes out like a steam-whistle. It must be a wonderful thing to be a great mathematician, and I suppose they do a vast deal of good to the world, but I should not be surprised if Einstein's fiddling had helped along the human spirit almost as much as his mathematics, maybe more.

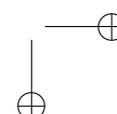
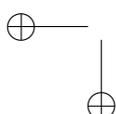
*22 November* – Reading Eisler's book on Christian origins brings out some things that are curiously contrary to long-accepted tradition, and make one wish mightily that there were a larger body of authentic documents in existence. I am much struck, for instance, by his section on the personal appearance of Jesus. He makes out as well as he can that Jesus was a hunchback, four-and-a-half feet tall, with hair plaited after the Nazarite fashion, with piercing eyes and a somewhat terrifying cast of countenance. One odd collateral point that he makes is that the crowd hid Jesus from Zacchæus's sight because "he," that is, Jesus, not Zacchæus, was "short of stature." This is certainly a permissive reading of the Greek as we have it, but not the reading that our tradition supports.

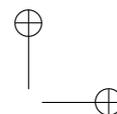
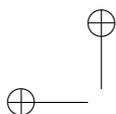




25 November – That was a fine saying of Henry George, in reply to someone who told him that the single tax was not a panacea, “No, I know it is not, but freedom is; and I am for the single tax because it is the way to freedom.” As I see it, the big hole in eighteenth-century political theory is that Locke and the others who worked it out did not seem to know that, granting it was at all practicable, it would be practicable only in a state of economic freedom. Neither did they seem to have any clear idea of how the State originated and what its primary purpose was – and is – or how that question affects the practicability of their theory. Some of the French radicals came close to both these points, but do not appear to have seen their full bearing. In America John Taylor alone saw the force of the second point, but was not clear about the first. I think something very good and useful might be written on this line today. One can hardly say that republicanism has failed, or say *a priori* that it is bound to fail, so long as it has not been tried under conditions essential to its success. Given those conditions, it may succeed or it may fail – that remains to be proved by the event – but obviously, unless those conditions are established it can not possibly succeed, and any expectation of its success is mere idleness.

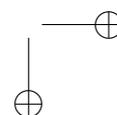
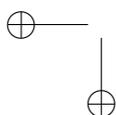
27 November – It strikes me that the Communists of Moscow have rayther let down their American brethren a little – maybe not, but things look that way. Litvinov’s statements to the press sound pretty fulsome. Of course he was out for what he could get, and proverbially more is got with sugar than with vinegar, which is all right; I am thinking only of the reaction upon the Communists here.

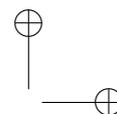
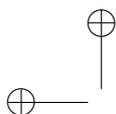




The real test will come when the debts are discussed, and I would not be surprised if Litvinov agrees, or has agreed, actually to pay something. They know their business best, but it looks to me as if we need their trade more than they need ours, and that therefore Litvinov had the whip hand. If it were not for the Japanese question, I would be pretty positive about it; there may have been some agreement aimed at the Japanese, as part of the bargain, whatever it was. Even so, access to the Chinese market must mean as much to us as the Russians' side of any obtainable bargain would mean to them. But I am uninformed about all this, and really not interested, for I have long taken any diplomatic *démarche* as a blind for some sort of covert rascality. I am not greatly impressed by Litvinov as a diplomat, however; by comparison with Chicherin he looks second-rate to me, and perhaps this affects my judgment of what he does.

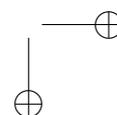
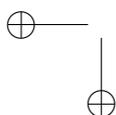
*28 November* – At dinner last night with Henry Mencken at Lüchow's; the conversation chiefly about music and English literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, hardly a word about public affairs or anything concerning this present world. Henry is a great admirer of Bishop Hall's writings, in particular; I remember the *Satires* well, though it is long since I read them, more than thirty years, I think. When we spoke of Richard Strauss, I was pleased to hear him mention *Morgen* first of all, for I regard it as Strauss's finest composition. There is no better companion in the world than Henry; I admire him, and have the warmest affection for him. I was impressed afresh by his superb character – immensely able, unselfconscious, sincere, erudite, simple-hearted,

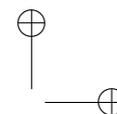
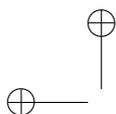




kindly, generous, really a noble fellow if ever there was one in the world. I am sorry I see so little of him, for it is a great loss, and of the kind that I can least well afford. He promises me that when I come to Baltimore he will get a string quartette together to play Haydn's seventy-seventh for me. Lüchow's restaurant has changed less than any place I know of in New York; in fact, I can not see that it has budged a jot in thirty years. Even the little orchestra is in its old place, playing the same fine order of music that one always heard, and the clientèle seems to be just what it always was. When the orchestra struck into some airs from the *Tales of Hoffmann*, Henry said, "There, that's for us; they have just caught sight of two sentimental old men sitting over here." We spoke about some of Offenbach's operettas, and when we mentioned the *Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*, I told him that I had passed very near Gerolstein on my way through the Eifel two years ago. Henry was interested and pleased to know there was actually such a place, as he had happened not to have heard of it. I suppose that Offenbach, being a native of Cologne, which is not far away, took the name as it occurred to him through familiarity, merely suggesting itself as having the right sound. Gerolstein is a pleasant little place, and in the loveliest region of all Germany, to my way of thinking. Most of Germany is beautiful, but I think the Mosel valley, the Eifel, and the Hunsrück make up its most beautiful district. No wonder that Ausonius got inspiration out of it for his best poetry.

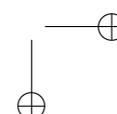
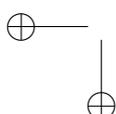
29 November – Lord, how the world is given to worshipping words! Eschew the coarse word *slavery*, and you can get

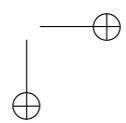
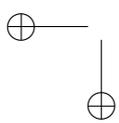
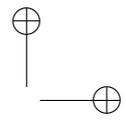
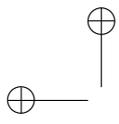


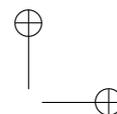
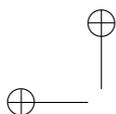


glad acceptance for a condition of actual slavery. A man is a slave when his labour-products are appropriated, and his activities are governed, by some agency other than himself; that is the essence of slavery. Refrain from using the word Bolshevism, or Fascism, Hitlerism, Marxism, Communism, and you have no trouble getting acceptance for the principle that underlies them all alike – the principle that the State is everything, and the individual nothing. “In the beginning was the Word” – that seems to have started all the trouble.

*30 November* – It is amusing to watch the unthinking man’s reaction to Governor Rolph’s promise to pardon the participants in the late lynching-bee out in California, if any of them are ever convicted. It sounds first-rate to him for about thirty-five minutes, and he is all for it; then he begins to have his doubts, and in a couple of weeks he is all on the other side. There are some collateral consequences of this epidemic of lynchings which may be good, if only it goes on long enough. At present it serves only to remind me that the sins of legislators appear invariably in the unforeseen and unforeseeable consequences of their legislation. When kidnaping was made a capital crime, probably not a single legislator realized that he was voting to put a premium on murder, and to provide a direct encouragement to lynching. When the old Raines law for the regulation of the liquor traffic was passed, no one dreamed that it would put an enormous premium on harlotry.

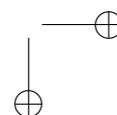
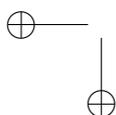


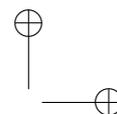
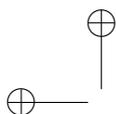




## 1933 December

*1 December* – Talking with Henry Mencken the other night set me thinking of musical matters, for instance how the old system of personal patronage seems conducive to getting the best out of composers. I can imagine Prince Esterhazy telling Papa Haydn that some of the boys were likely to be around for dinner Thursday night, and he wanted them to hear a little real stuff that they could go away and talk about, for they were the kind that knew a good thing when they heard it. The modern composer, even though some Mæcenas may be staking him, must after all write for a popular audience, indiscriminate and nondescript. Prince Esterhazy provided Haydn with more than a living; he provided him with the *imprimatur* of a discriminating and influential audience. Whatever that audience approved would command popular approval, so Haydn did not need to be distracted about any question of adapting his music to any special taste; all he had to do was to write as good music as he knew how, and keep on writing it. Mr. Otto Kahn can stake composers as generously as Prince Esterhazy, and all honour to him for doing it, but he can not provide that

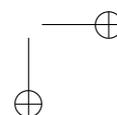
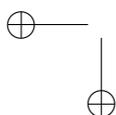


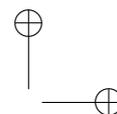
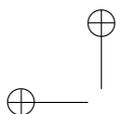


kind of audience; he can only arm the poor composer to fight the losing battle of art with the many-headed arbiter of taste.

I have been thinking also, as I do so often, of the great singers I have heard, and laying my insignificant tribute of reverence upon their memory. Well, as I remember Clément, Battistini and Selma Kurz, so lately dead, I can say to pretty near a certainty that the blessed saints and the Apostles are listening to such an exhibition of breath-control and tone-production as they haven't heard in a long time, and are not likely to hear again from any delegation that this planet will send up there for a good many years to come.

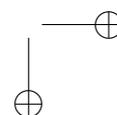
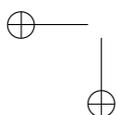
*2 December* – So I am a Tory, am I? I see that Bro. Roosevelt has handed that cap around among men who are of my way of thinking, so it seems I must put it on, whether it fits or not. Who was it in England who called politics “the apotheosis of the second-rate,” or something like that? I am glad to see that a few people have been taking Roosevelt up in the newspapers on this imbecility about Toryism. A Tory, as Spencer defines the word, is a person who wishes to strengthen the régime of status and weaken the régime of contract; and a liberal is one who wishes to do the opposite. I have drawn every breath of a fairly long lifetime in inflexible opposition to the régime of status, so as I near the end of my days I am a little astonished at being called a Tory. But perhaps the term has been somehow clapper-clawed into meaning something wholly different – like the term liberal. The people who nowadays call themselves liberals certainly seem to have about as much regard for the régime of

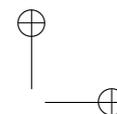
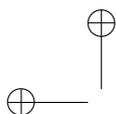




contract as the late lamented Lord Curzon. I believe the régime of contract would be dealt with far more honourably – yes, and more sympathetically – by the late Wm. H. Taft and even by Mr. Hughes, than by any one of those I know who profess and call themselves liberals.

*4 December* – Word went around today that the new “reform” mayor of New York, La Guardia, was in the Club Anonyme, and one young member left off what he was doing and hurried upstairs to get a glimpse of him. It occurred to me then, how little important it is to destroy a government, in comparison with destroying the *prestige* of government. This prestige is purely adventitious; it is a stream of drainage that has seeped down from the old notion of the divine right of kings. On the theory of popular sovereignty, Mr. Bryan was precisely right in saying that the President of the United States is merely the people’s hired man. The most wholesome sign of a rational attitude towards public affairs would be the complete absence of any curiosity about the personality of public servants. When a citizen will put himself out no more to look at a mayor or a President than he would to look at a cook or a chauffeur, it will show that public affairs are on the up-grade; but for this country, that time is very far off. Among the many odious functions that journalism has taken on itself to perform, perhaps the most odious and debasing is that of supporting the prestige of government by pandering to this low type of curiosity.

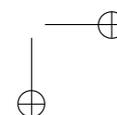
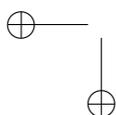


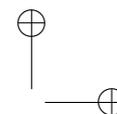
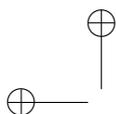


*5 December* – Looking over an album of pictures published in the *New Yorker* several years ago, I was struck with the evidence that the excesses of one generation are seldom repeated in the next. It would not surprise me at all if the very young people of the present time should turn out to be rather on the discreet and temperate side, perhaps even a little strait-laced and modish; and this, I mean, of their own motion, and with no one making any particular effort to turn them that way.

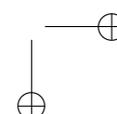
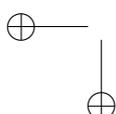
*6 December* – I have often wondered why the peculiarly British type of superiority is more exasperating than any other, as it seems to be. Would it be because the Briton does not give the impression of having ever rationalized his attitude or even thought about it? Perhaps so. The superior German, for instance, makes me think that he has consciously built the pedestal of his own superiority, and consciously mounted it; while the Briton makes me think he has stepped up on his pedestal without any thought at all, as the natural place for him to be, and that he quite honestly could not understand any suggestion that he should step down or should be shaken off it. It seems rather a Hibernicism to say that his attitude of superiority is most objectionable because it is so free from self-consciousness, but that seems about what it comes to. I do not know that I am too well satisfied with this analysis, but it is the best I can do.

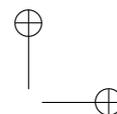
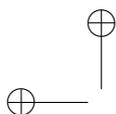
*7 December* – Considered as a process, culture consists in an intensive learning and an intensive forgetting. Thus when a smart little Jewish boy from the East Side, or an alfalfa-fed girl from the great open spaces, comes to





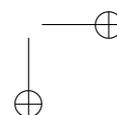
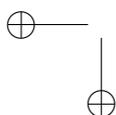
the college or university in search of culture, one should say, "Youngster, it is an affair of many years, many things, and much labour. You must learn much, and forget much, and the forgetting is as important as the learning." Considered as a possession, culture might be described as the residuum left by a diligently forgotten learning. For example, someone tells you that Plato said so-and-so. You say, "I think not. What I have read of Plato and forgotten, and also of a great many other authors, likewise forgotten, has left the residual impression that Plato was extremely unlikely to have said anything of the kind." Then you look it up, and find that you are right. But what would our modern schools think of a person who had this notion of culture? Oxford expresses somewhat this notion in a practical way, or did once express it, and therein largely lay the greatness of Oxford. I could never reconcile myself to the idea that the scientific school had any proper place in a university. A university implies faculties, and the function of a faculty is not the dissemination of useful knowledge, but the curatorship of useless knowledge; the kind of knowledge that, properly acquired and properly forgotten, leaves the residuum of culture. I have even had doubts about the position of the Faculty of Medicine in the traditional four faculties. I can see how it came to be included, and why in a sense it should be included still. Formerly it did not do much with the science of medicine, but mostly with its history and literature; and this was all very good, quite what a Faculty of Medicine should be doing now. For example, the Faculty of Medicine at Johns Hopkins ought not to be dealing out useful knowledge to medical students. Let a medical school do that. It ought to

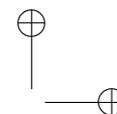
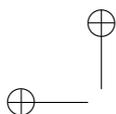




be winnowing and conserving the vast body of useless knowledge that has grown up around the profession. In short, it ought not to be making practitioners; it ought to be making practitioners like Pancoast and William Osler. Similarly, the Faculty of Law ought not to aim at turning out lawyers, but at turning out lawyers like Coleridge, Lord Penzance, or James Coolidge Carter. That seems to have been the more or less conscious aim of the mediæval faculty; at least, its curriculum tended that way. Let us have all the science there is, let us have all the useful knowledge there is, but let us have them from the scientific schools, and leave the colleges and the universities free to employ themselves upon the enormous resources of useless knowledge, which are of such incalculable value, and are now so completely neglected that one could make out a pretty good case for the thesis that the world is perishing of inattention to the discipline of useless knowledge.

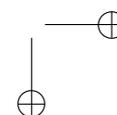
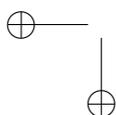
*8 December* – One is pleased to see how quietly the repeal of Prohibition is being taken in New York, and from all I hear, quite generally throughout the country. There was no commotion of any kind here, none of the display of exuberant spirits such as I fully expected. I was in the Club Anonyme when Grenville Vernon came in with the news that Utah had voted, and that repeal was at last a fact. It did not interrupt conversation for more than a moment; we listened without comment, and went on talking as before. I was astonished by this, and still more astonished to find later that it was rather typical of the whole country's attitude. Probably all the emotional steam had been let out of the population by

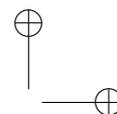
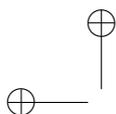




degrees during the progress of the repeal through the State legislatures; the conclusion was too much a foregone thing to stir up any excitement. However this may be, there is no ground for overmuch self-congratulation, for our progress out of Prohibition is simply a progress from one legislative botch to another – again a mere redistribution of profit. Hence we shall see another fine sequence of abuse and corruption cropping up, I predict, within ten days' time; and there will be no checking it. I would wager that before the year is out, the romance of the “good old speakeasy” will begin to be spun out of men's memories, as they see themselves assailed by a new variant of corruption and extortion. I mean to keep track of this, as a matter of curiosity.

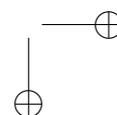
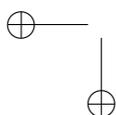
*9 December* – An interesting experience with commercial methods, and rather exhibitory of the difference between two civilizations. I ran out of ink in Brussels, and on looking around for some, I was told that the best in stock was one made in England by the American firm of Parker, the fountain-pen people. I got some, and found it satisfactory; it was labelled Parker's Jet Black Documentary Ink. I inquired for it just now by that name here, and was told that no such thing existed. When all came to all, I discovered that in this country Parker sells what appears to be quite the same thing under the ridiculous name of Quink. Now, really, what opinion can a manufacturer have of the intelligence and self-respect of his customers when he feels called upon to cut up such a repulsive antic as that? On the other hand, what opinion does Parker have of his English customers in paying them this tribute of simple sober decency in

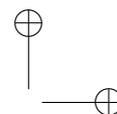
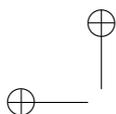




advertising his goods? These questions, too, are quite apart from the fundamental question of the respect, or lack of it, that Parker has for his own product. If he had any feeling for it at all beyond regarding it merely as something made to sell, one would say that he could never bring himself to advertise it by a cheap and nasty name. By contrast I was reminded of the best ink I ever saw – probably the best in the world – made by Higgins in Brooklyn. It still carries the old-fashioned label, and is advertised in a way that suits the dignity of such a product. The trouble with Higgins's ink is that it is too good to use with a fountain pen; probably no carbon ink can be made that will work well with any but a steel pen. This ink is so good, though, that I have often thought of giving up a fountain pen for the sake of using it.

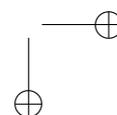
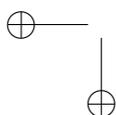
*10 December* – In a talk about songs today, I was reminded of the way I was set back by a very young man a few years ago. I had said I thought the two greatest songs ever written were Beethoven's *Adelaide* and the *Prize Song*. The young man very courteously said that these were not songs. I was rather taken aback, and asked him what he meant by that. He said, "No, they are not songs, not really. The voice and words do not count; the music is just as good without them as with them. Play *Adelaide* over, or better, let an orchestra go over it, and you won't miss the voice at all." I am not quite sure about this – I would like to make some experiments – but the young man was so nearly right that there was nothing much to say. I enjoyed the experience and felt very warm towards the youngster; he had something worth saying, and he said it in a very pleasing way.

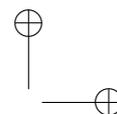
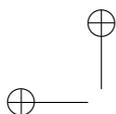




*11 December* – Ruminating over a picture of Johnson, head of the N.R.A., that I happened to see in a newspaper. It made me wonder afresh at the public's insensitiveness to the character-index afforded by the portraits of job-holders. I think I never saw a more villainous-looking countenance than this picture gave Johnson – a face in perfect keeping with such of his public acts and utterances as have come under my notice; which were such as one attributes instinctively to a plug-ugly or a Bowery bouncer of the old days. I think it would pay the public to look attentively at these portraits and study them carefully as they are published from time to time. They may sometimes exaggerate an evil cast of countenance, but not invariably, nor can the cast of countenance be wholly an exaggeration.

*12 December* – Talk in the club about the language of the Book of Common Prayer, and the wording of the recent revisions. One hopes the Episcopal Church will not try to tinker the Prayer-book any more. As it originally stood it was hard to improve, and the Church's efforts strike one as relatively puny. Old Henry's court was a bad place, and certainly it reckoned a lot of hard citizens among its habitués, but by some special grace or some remarkable freak of chance, Cranmer and his associates did a piece of work that will take a deal of beating. *Sive casu, sive consilio deorum immortalium*, they raised a mighty monument to the glory of the English tongue. The nearest that the American Church ever came to the standard they set is in the Preface. My understanding is that this preface was written by Robert Smith, who was bishop of some Southern diocese for a short time – I think

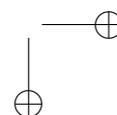
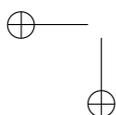


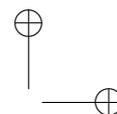
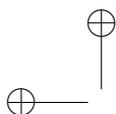


it was South Carolina – and about whom nothing much is known. As I recall the story, he held office only three months, or some such matter, and was found dead by a country roadside. His one public achievement, however, was a worthy one, and he ought to have credit for it.

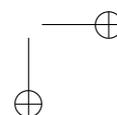
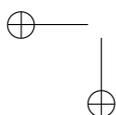
*13 December* – The hotels and restaurants are thriving since repeal. In the Lafayette the other day one could hardly find a place for lunch; they told me that business was far ahead of expectations, and I hear the same thing everywhere. I had not been in the Lafayette for a year or more, but all hands remembered me and gave me the most cordial kind of welcome; I lived there for a time, long ago, before the war. I was astonished at their friendliness, for my business with them never amounted to anything worth mentioning. I spoke about this to Cassandre once, I remember, and she merely smiled, and said, “Haven’t you learned yet that in a French restaurant the poor clients are the only ones who get any kind of decent treatment?” When one thinks of it, there is something in this. I know of no place whose good graces are harder to buy into with raw money than an old-style French restaurant like the Lafayette; nor a place where sincere appreciation and moderately good taste go farther.

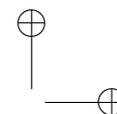
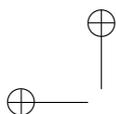
*14 December* – At dinner I joined a group of three. One of them, a journalist, made the rather surprising statement that newspapermen soon lost the faculty of reading. “I have lost it,” he said, “as far as English is concerned. If I am reading French or German, where I have to read word by word to get the sense, I can do it, but not with English.





Our attention is so addled by the stuff we have to read that we cannot hold it continuously through a respectable paragraph." I suspect that this may be true, from what I have observed of the type of lay mind that regularly reads nothing but newspapers. I remember Frank Neilson's remark, long ago, that the very architecture of an American house showed plainly that nobody in it either read with attention or thought with concentration. He had in mind the open hallways and doorways that carry every sound and leave everyone virtually underfoot of everyone else. This arrangement, I suppose, is part of the bitter national resentment against privacy; and so is the newspaper. The unpleasant sense of intrusion caused by seeing one's name in the newspaper is presumably felt by very few. I came upon my name unexpectedly in one the other day, and it affected me most disagreeably, as it always does, though happily I seldom see it. I happened to be near a newspaperman at the time, and mentioned the matter to him. He said that the item was harmless, and he could not understand my dislike of it. "If you had been caught in a raid on a brothel, or something like that," he said, "I could understand your feeling very resentful of getting your name in the paper, but this is another matter." It suddenly struck me then that in the circumstances he spoke of, I would not in the least mind seeing my name in the paper – nor would I. "Those circumstances are the purview of your paper," I told him. "If I were caught in a raid and you published it, I and your paper would be degraded together, and I should have no feeling in the matter at all" – and as far as I know myself, that is true. What is especially objectionable to me is the thought of an obituary notice; it seems

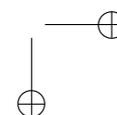
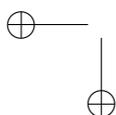


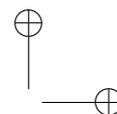
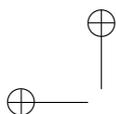


such a gratuitously filthy thing to post a man's death before the idle newspaper-reader, practically illiterate, who neither knows nor cares a straw for him. I asked my acquaintance if he could give me any professional advice about some way to escape the chance of this, and he said no; the only way was to die somehow anonymously, and this was difficult nowadays, with communications what they are. One marvels continually at man's ingenuity in devising means of communication, and at the utter futility of the uses to which he habitually puts them.

*15 December* – What a strange thing it is that good stories slip one's memory so quickly. The philosopher Mansel, dean of St. Paul's, was said to be the best storyteller of his time, and yet I have heard that his biographer raked the whole United Kingdom without finding a single person who could recall one story he had told. Shoals of people had heard him tell them, but no one could remember one. Frank Neilson was far and away the greatest story-teller I ever knew, and I have heard him tell fifty, I am sure, so good that, at the time, I would have taken oath I could never forget them. Yet only the other day I was trying my best to recall one of them – any one – and could not do it. I imagine that public speakers must make notes of the yarns they hear; there seems to be no other way to retain them.

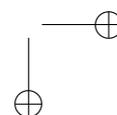
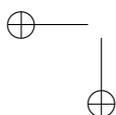
*16 December* – I see my prediction is coming true; one hears complaints on every side that all the hard liquor obtainable since repeal is very vile, and that graft and corruption have already sprouted thick throughout the system of control and distribution. I heard one man say

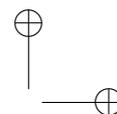
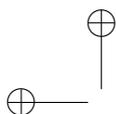




he was sorry he had voted for repeal; the bootlegger, he said, was the most honest man he had ever found to deal with in the whole world of business. Of course he was. First, his business rested entirely on confidence, as all business should. Second, the government's hands were off it. Third, it could not be advertised through the regular channels. Under these circumstances there was every inducement for the bootlegger to be honest and scrupulous, and every natural penalty headed straight his way if he were not so. This is an interesting line of reflection for the friends of governmental control and legal regulation of business by the sanction of artificial penalties. Put any business in the same circumstances as the bootlegger's and it would automatically become quite honest enough for society to get along with. I imagine that even now, a week after repeal, we are seeing the halo of nostalgic romance take shape about the bootlegger's head, and that before a year is out it will shine with brilliant light.

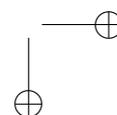
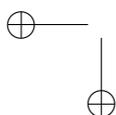
A man closely associated with Mr. Roosevelt for many years, and quite friendly towards him, has just told me that he never once knew him to make a move, even the slightest, without considering first and foremost its political effect. This bears out the impression that I have been forming since my return here. I see no evidence whatever that he has had, or has now, any other than an electioneering interest in the country's situation. I have found no record of any word or deed of his that would not have been mine if I were a politician with an eye fixed on a second term – and that, as I have often said, is the only test I ever apply in such circumstances, and I believe it is the best one. Suppose I had been Mr. Roosevelt, and

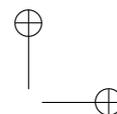
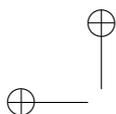




been elected last year, what line of reasoning would I have followed? I would have seen what happened to Wilson at the hands of Congress, also what Harding and Hoover went through. I would say to myself that if I openly took sides with the conservative element, the wild men in Congress would blow the roof off the Capitol; and then I would remember the Southerner on the border, who told his boy that if anybody asked him any questions, he should “tell em that you’re Union, but remember you’re Secesh,” and I would talk a bit vaguely but guardedly on the radical side. Meanwhile I should have seen the need of something to draw the conservative lightning, and having learned from Nietzsche that professors always play the comic rôle in politics, I would herd up a crew of them, and let them have the best kind of time at fiddling with their pet nostrums, right up to the point of something actually happening, but no further; and each one who got disgruntled and left me, I should count as worth about ten votes in Congress. Then considering the state of the country, I would see that it was in the mood of a shying horse that needs a good smart lash and some blackguarding, to take his mind off the thing he shies at; so I would organize what my old friend in Brussels called “a series of *galéjades*” which would not actually amount to much, but which would sound like a great deal.

As far as its stated purposes are concerned, I can not make out that the New Deal has accomplished enough to terrify anybody, whether in the way of good or evil. In this it has been like its lineal ancestor, the Big Stick of Roosevelt I. Collaterally, however, it has accomplished a great deal in the direction of the two things, and the



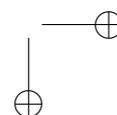
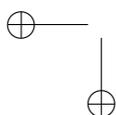


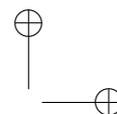
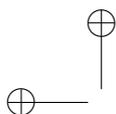
only two, that in my hypothetical view are important – the extension of a vote-controlling bureaucracy, and the subsidizing of large sections of the population. I would have perceived that the country was in a mood to stand an enormous dose of bureaucratization, and I would provide it; also it was in a mood to stand a prodigious outlay of money – well, why not erect mendicancy into a political asset, since the chance was there?

The effect of all this being what it should be, I should count on Congress to go along, knowing that Congress never looks for trouble. But if Congress broke over the traces, I would be in a fine position to go before the country and say, “Trust *me*.” I would think that position was politically sound, as the present situation seems to show it is. I do not believe that certain individuals would have acted as they have lately – notably Henry Ford – or that the stock-market would have behaved as it has these last few days, if somebody had not been quietly tipped off to the effect that the Japanese war-mask is not so deadly as it looks, now that the two real purposes of political enterprise had been pretty well achieved.

In another view, of course, the New Deal wears another aspect; but I am not regarding it at the moment as anything but a sheer adventure in practical politics, which I am completely convinced it is.

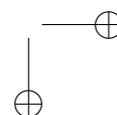
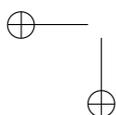
*17 December* – Another step in the passage of the science of my day away from metaphysics into investigations of the concrete, and through those, out into metaphysics again. I see today that Einstein’s sole remaining “constant” – the speed of light – has turned out to be a variable. According to the press-reports, some scien-

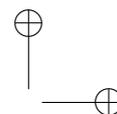
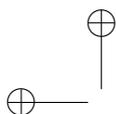




tificker out West has found out that the speed of light has rhythm; causes not stated, nor do I imagine they will be discerned for some time. Just so. Suppose that while Karl Marx was sweating out *Das Kapital* in the British Museum, he had had a prophetic warning that the time would come when a great physicist would say that the definition of matter as an idea in the mind of the Absolute was probably about the best we could do! I think he would have put his manuscript in the stove, and then gone down and jumped into the Thames. Perhaps physical science will some day bear irrefragable witness that belief is the enemy of faith and faith the enemy of belief! They meet only as enemies; their opposition is fixed and irreconcilable. How odd it would be, and how unspeakably glorious, if after these long, dull ages of belief, the world should emerge into an era of faith; an era when life would be like the best that Greek literature portrays – when the sun would be genial, flowers radiant, bird-notes sweet, and human beings at last conscious of how rich life is, and how little they have been asking of it. It would take many generations for faith to percolate through the human mass as a solvent of belief, and perhaps indeed the mass is impervious to it; yet such a thing is not inconceivable. Possibly these times of belief – political belief, social, economic, scientific, religious belief – are the appointed and necessary means for evolving a race that shall be fit for the life of faith.

*18 December* – It would seem from all I hear that the Jews are the only people who are able to do well out of a managed currency and a fluctuating exchange. I am told that their manipulations are usually very successful,

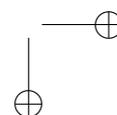
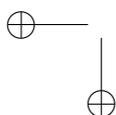


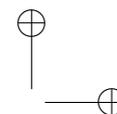
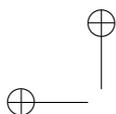


as if by a kind of prescience which other people do not have. There seems no doubt that such gifts exist, though there is no accounting for them; they are very mysterious. Years ago, when I was in Jamaica, people told me that whenever an earthquake came on, the mules somehow got advance-notice of it and would lift up their voices and stampede for safety; and unless interfered with in some way, they always found it. The one and only way to keep out of trouble with an earthquake, according to the natives, was to follow a loose mule. Perhaps the Jewish mind gets similar premonitions of movements in the currency and exchange. What I am interested in, however, is whether anti-Jewish sentiment is rising in this country, and how far it may be trusted to go without an outbreak of some kind. I am told it is rising, but I have my doubts; yet as it always springs from an economic root, it may be.

It turns out that these notes of mine are to be published, which I never thought they would be. On looking them over I found three statements that seemed unjust, so I struck them out – a matter of some seven lines in all. I have also put one institution under a pseudonym, in conformity with a wise and good tradition; and in half a dozen instances I have substituted initials for the names of persons. Otherwise the notes stand quite as I wrote them, *currente calamo*.

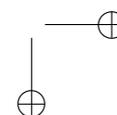
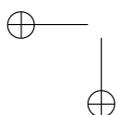
*19 December* – As I see the “holiday rush” coming on, I feel a growing sympathy with Scrooge, and begin to think he was probably a pretty good fellow, compared with me. Nothing much was done with Christmas in this country prior to 1860, and I can remember when it was

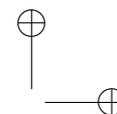
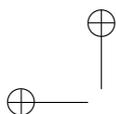




celebrated in a very simple fashion. Presently merchants began to see that the sentiment of the season could be profitably exploited, and the result is what we now see; it is a triumph of *Geschäft*, pure and simple. Its irony is that the offspring of those who crucified Jesus are the ones who profit most by the seasonal sentiment of Christians. But in the Jewish view, *Geschäft ist immer Geschäft*, and most of the Christians are too dull-witted to perceive the anomaly. The Belgians do almost nothing with Christmas, but a good deal with New Year's Day, and the children have their innings on St. Nicholas' Day. Of course, like most of the Christian calendar, the date of Christmas is purely arbitrary, for no one knows when the *Santissimo Salvatore* was born, or can even make a reasonable guess.

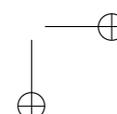
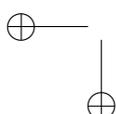
*20 December* – I came across some anecdotes of Horace Vernet, the French painter, which show a much more penetrating intelligence than I thought he had. Speaking of republicanism, he said he had seen a couple of republics in his own lifetime, and “there may be another half-dozen like these in the next two centuries, because before you can have an ideal republic you must have ideal republicans, and Nature can not afford to fool away her most precious gifts on a crew of jack-leg lawyers and hobnail-booted riffraff. Now and then she condescends to make an ideal tyrant, but she will never make a nation of ideal republicans. You might as well ask her to make a nation of Raphaels, Michelangelos, Shakespeares or Molières.” This is pretty perspicacious talk for a man who was born the month after the outbreak of the French Revolution, and lived until 1863. Still, he should have

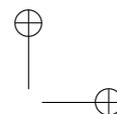
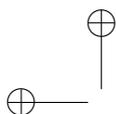




known what he was talking about. He lived through the First Republic, the Reign of Terror, the Directory, the Consulate, the First Empire, the First Restoration, the Hundred Days, the Second Restoration, the July Monarchy, the Second Republic, and half-way through the Second Empire. This would seem a fairly intensive training in the nature and purposes of government, and enough to give almost anyone a fair measure of the sort of people who make politics a career; yet a great many of Vernet's contemporaries learned little enough from it. I should dislike to hazard a guess at the percentage of this country's population who could live through twice as much and learn nothing.

*21 December* – Harlow's book called *Old Bowery Days* has been giving me a world of pleasure lately. It is a splendid piece of work on a great subject. Using all proper caution about making such a statement, I really think if the question were submitted, impartial judges might decide that the Bowery is the most interesting street in the world. I can think of none that compares with it for continuous and general interest. The only fault I can find with Mr. Harlow's book is that there is not nearly enough of it; and of course his publishers would have a great deal to say about that. Mr. Harlow has packed an immense amount of information into a good long single volume, and done it as capably as a woman packs a trunk; no one could do it better, and very few as well. But a single volume is not enough, for a proper history of the Bowery would be a history of the whole lower East Side, which, as the author says, the Bowery has always served as its great business-thoroughfare and





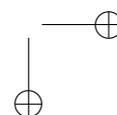
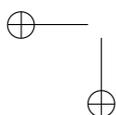
pleasure-ground. It would be the history, for example, of Sailortown in the 'eighties – a stirring history, that! – of the Five Points, the Dry Dock district, of the successive implantations of immigrants here and there. The author touches on most of these, but can do no more. If the Bowery is really, as I think, the most interesting street in the world, this volume ought to be multiplied to two or three.

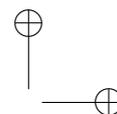
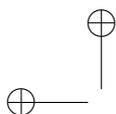
*22 December* – I am told today that New York audiences weep unrestrainedly over the film-production of Mrs. Alcott's *Little Women*; and not over the one sad part alone, but over the happy parts. Apparently the sentiment is nostalgic; a sentiment for a kind of life that one feels is gone forever and that seems unspeakably remote – the life of poor people in contentment, without strife or envy, doing generous things in a humble way, and finding happiness in them. Some Southern newspaper, I see, has noticed that so many tears were being shed over this film down there that the audiences would do well to wear their raincoats. It is no bad thing, on the whole, to confront “our enlightened age” with this film –

Virtutem videant, intabescantque relictæ.

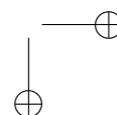
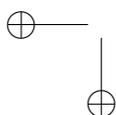
Perhaps some day we may find that even life on Main Street had features that were not wholly devoid of merit. I lived a long time on Main Street, and I think I can recall a few.

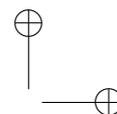
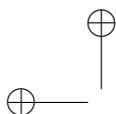
*23 December* – Mr. Walter Lippmann says in yesterday's *Herald-Tribune* that “it is agreed that the President pos-





esses the confidence of the great mass of the people in all parts of the country. . . , and that they believe he is making substantial progress in the right direction." I should say so, most emphatically; and if there be any doubt, Mr. Mark Sullivan is on hand in the same issue of the *Herald-Tribune* to clear it away. He says he has it from "one of the leading radicals" in the Administration, that "in America we now have roughly twenty million people getting their living from employment by the Federal government." Mr. Lippmann is correct, and for cause; the subsidizing of twenty million people means unlimited confidence, sound belief, and a deuced whaling lot of votes. Mr. Lippmann says further that "to all appearances the position of the President in the new Congress will be very strong." Mr. Lippmann is right again; and this time, in the same issue of the same paper, Mr. Henry L. Mencken is on hand to prove that he is right. In citing the performances of only a few of Mr. Roosevelt's almoners, Mencken says that the Public Works branch of the business has already laid out \$3,300,000,000 since last spring, and will need \$1,875,000,000 next year; the Relief branch has distributed half a billion, and may need as much more; the Civil Works needs \$350,000,000; and he quotes Mr. Moley's paper as saying that the cotton farmers are being subsidized to the tune of \$150,000,000, the wheat farmers \$110,000,000, the tobacco planters about \$19,000,000, and the corn-and-hog farmers \$350,000,000. Can anyone see how the President's position in the new Congress could be improved? I can not. It strikes me that by these three articles, the *Herald-Tribune* achieved the feat of telling the whole story of the New Deal, past, present and to come, all in a single issue.





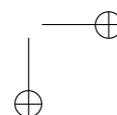
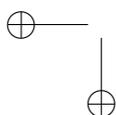
*24 December* – An anecdote of Talleyrand flashed up in my mind today. I had not thought of it for years, and it is so apposite that I have been chuckling over it all the afternoon. When Calonne was *Contrôleur-général des Finances*, in 1785, and was setting the pace for all the inflationists, currency-jugglers, borrowers, spendthrifts and bogus economists who should come after him, Talleyrand remarked one day, “Of course I knew that man would be sure to save the world, but I never expected him to do it so soon.” There was a good deal of fine wit going in France at that period, and I believe it is not generally known that the “citizen-king,” Louis-Philippe, who was of no such bourgeois spirit as he let on to be, supplied his share of it. When Talleyrand’s death was reported to him, he asked, “Are you sure he is dead?”

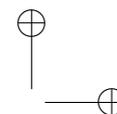
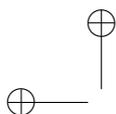
“Very sure,” was the answer. “Surely when your majesty visited him yesterday, your majesty must have perceived that he was a dying man.”

“Ah, yes, I did think so,” said the king, “but one can’t judge by appearances with Talleyrand; and ever since I saw him I have been racking my brains to guess what interest he could have in dying at this particular moment.”

This story is also apposite; the other one suggested it at once; that question might occur to anyone today on hearing that one of our politicians had died.

*25 December* – Christmas, and a day of extraordinary dissipation for me. A visit with friends uptown at noon, and with another group of friends in the evening. I can not remember when I have done anything like that in New York, living as I do in the strictest retirement. I



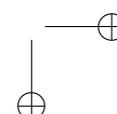
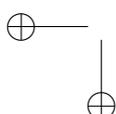


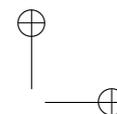
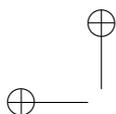
am paying for my fun with a sleepless night, my second in succession; last night I lay awake until five o'clock. In some ways I have uncommonly strong resistance and endurance, and in others none at all – curious!

*26 December* – On my way to the South County, through a driving snow. I am much fagged, though I have been doing actually very little. Mere existence in New York, under whatever conditions, wears the soul out of anyone but those of its kind. I think of it as Samuel Johnson did of Scotland. Somebody took him to task for railing at Scotland, saying that, after all, God made it. “Quite true, sir,” Johnson replied, “but you must bear in mind, in the first place, sir, that He made it for Scotsmen; and in the second place, sir, you should bear in mind that He also made hell.”

*27 December* – A superb night's sleep, and quite myself again. Snow and wind, drifts everywhere, and very cold; everything inaccessible, myself most of all – “snow-bound” to Whittier's own taste, with plenty of fire, plenty to smoke and plenty of work, and plenty of spirit to get the best out of all three. Now for them.

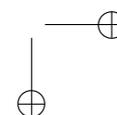
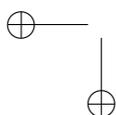
*28 December* – The only man in the Administration who interests me at all is the Secretary of Agriculture. I know of one or two instances where he has taken an honest man's attitude before the public, when he might easily have taken a politician's attitude. On the subject of production-control in agriculture, he told the country precisely what ailed the market, precisely what could and should be done about it, and that if this were not

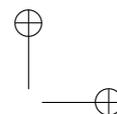
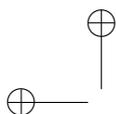




done, the only alternative would be a series of measures “which are abhorrent to every class in our society.” That is plain, full and fair dealing with the public; it is very much the sort of thing that Mr. Jefferson used to put out. One wonders what would have happened if Mr. Roosevelt had talked like that last March. Suppose he had told the people just what was fundamentally wrong with our economic system, and just what could and should be done to correct it permanently; he could state all this in half a dozen sentences. Then suppose he had gone on to say, “But this reform is manifestly impracticable. The only alternative is a series of measures which are abhorrent to every class in our society, and to me as well. They are violent, dishonest, despicable; and the degradation that will ensue on them is the price we have to pay for our unwillingness to do what we might do and ought to do. I now propose to inaugurate these measures, and carry them out as energetically as I can; but I wish it clearly understood that I am aware of their character, and aware that in the long-run they will be ineffectual. I never knew of an injustice being effectively corrected by another injustice, and I believe we shall find, as one of my predecessors very well said, that nothing is ever settled until it is settled right.”

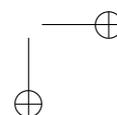
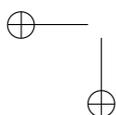
The only important public man in my day who I think was capable of saying something like this in these circumstances, was Bonar Law. His declaration of policy when he took over the government gave me a vast respect for him as a man who would never let anything weigh an ounce against integrity, sincerity and candour. Campbell-Bannerman may have been like that, but he was a bit before my time.

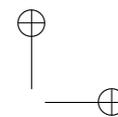
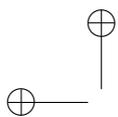




*29 December* – What a curious notion it is that the State can set a standard of commercial ability, competence and integrity which is above the average standard of the individuals who administer the State's concerns! Down in New York the other day, a man told me with a great air of finality that unless a certain great public-service corporation behaved better, "the government would take it over." He could not have been more earnestly reverential if he had spoken of an impending intervention of God. The odd thing is that the collapse of Prohibition has just given us a most spectacular object-lesson in the matter of State-meddling; a lesson apparently quite wasted. I foresee that for a long time to come we shall go on believing that there is a "political alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts," and that our officialdom at Washington is composed of sovereign alchemists. But there is no such alchemy.

*30 December* – Chinard's book on John Adams has just reached me, quite late; it came out in my absence last spring, or I should have got hold of it at once. I have not got far with it yet, but it bids fair to be pretty well what I have been hoping for. John Adams interests and attracts me more than anyone in that period except Mr. Jefferson, and I have always believed that no biographer or historian has done him anything like justice. I hope Chinard gives him full credit for his learning, both general and special. In a general way he seems to have been as learned as Mr. Jefferson, and he was by far the most learned student of government in the country. I must try to get a word about Chinard's book into some publication, for it is evidently very good; but I suppose all the magazines





have already arranged for a notice of it – such, that is, as mean to notice it at all.

*31 December* – R. gave me a beautiful pen-and-ink drawing of the Monnaie on a rainy night, an exquisite thing; the only trouble is that the sight of it makes me so absurdly homesick. I know that rain, and the picture has it to perfection, driving down on a wind off the North Sea, colder than death, yet not freezing. What a climate! – one has to fight it night and day to keep alive. But as I look at the picture and see the murky lights of the Monnaie struggling through the rain, I would gladly close out the whole Western Hemisphere at eight cents on the dollar, gold, if only I might be there.

